Ma'aarif-e-Mathnawi

The Commentry of the Mathnawi of
Hazrat Maulana
Jalaluddin Rumi

(Rahmatullah Alaihe)

Shaikh-ul-Arab Wal Ajam Arifbillah
Hazrat-e-Aqdas Maulana Shah

Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb

(Damat Barakaatuhum)

Kutub Khana Mazhari

Gulshan Iqbal Block-2 Karachi.
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معارفِ مثنوی

MA'AARIF
E
MATHNAWI

A Commentary of the MATHNAWI
Of
Hazrat Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi
(Rahmatullah Alaihe)

By:
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About the Author

Shaikh-ul-Arab Wal Ajam Arifbillah Hazrat-e-Aqdas Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (damat barakaatuhum) is a glittering star amongst the friends of Allah Ta'ala. Hazrat Maulana's heart is brimming with the LOVE of Allah Ta'ala and His beloved Rasul (*sallellaho alaihe wasallam*). Readers of Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb's (*damat barakaatuhum*) writings and listeners of his speeches are in reality drinking from the three fountains of knowledge and sincere LOVE for Allah Ta'ala and His beloved Rasul (*sallellaho alaihe wasallam*). These three great spiritual fountains are:

- **Hazrat Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani Phulpuri Saheb (Rahmatullah Alaihe)**
- **Hazrat Maulana Shah Muhammad Ahmad Saheb (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and**
- **Hazrat Maulana Shah Abrarul Haq Saheb (Rahmatullah Alaihe)**

in whose company Hazrat spent many years of his life and received '*khilafat*' from them.

Hazrat Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (*damat barakaatuhum*) is the author of numerous books on various subjects, especially on 'Tasawwuf ' and on "Maarifat" (recognition) of Allah Ta'ala. His commentary of the 'Mathnawi Sharif' of Maulana Rumi Saheb (*Rahmatullah Alaihe*) has been hailed by great Ulama such as Maulana Yusuf Binnori Saheb , Shaikh Zakariyya Saheb, Maulana Manzoor Nomani Saheb and Maulana Shah Abrarul Haq Saheb (*Rahmatullah Alaihim)* (his own Shaikh), as a commentary which ignites the love of Allah Ta'ala and deeply effects the hearts of readers.

He has thousands of 'Mureeds' (disciples) in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, America, England, Canada, South Africa, Reunion and many other parts of the world. The spiritual benefit to those who spend time in his company, sincerely desiring reformation, is evident in their transformed lifes. The fact that great Ulama and many Scholars of Hadith and *Tafsir*, who are themselves of a high spiritual rank, have became "*Bay'at*" (pledged allegiance) upon his hands is a clear indication of his esteemed rank and profound knowledge of Deen.

Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb's (*damat barakaatuhum*) visit to South Africa and many other countries of the world is spiritually most rejuvenating to both the young and the old, who flock in large numbers to hear his inspiring talks on various subjects.

The basic themes of his talks have always been:

- The development of love of the Creator and Sustainer, Almighty Allah Ta'ala, in the hearts.
- Following the beautiful lifestyle of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam).
- The fulfillment of the rights of Allah Ta'ala and His Creation.
- And most importantly **abstinence from all sins**, which is a guaranteed prescription for becoming **a friend of Allah Ta'ala.**

سارے عالم میں یہی اختر کی ہے آہ و فغاں

چند دن خونِ تمنا سے خدا مل جائے ہے

This is the cry of Akhtar throughout the world

Allah Ta'ala will be attained just by sacrificing

unlawful desires for a few days.

FOREWORD

All praise is due to Allah Ta'ala who blessed the "*ISHA' ATUL HAQ*" with the bounty of undertaking the translation and publication of the "*Ma'aarif- e -Mathnawi*" of Hazrat Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (damat barakaatuhum). Innumerable Durood and Salaams be upon our beloved Nabi Sayyedena Muhammad (sallellaho alaihe wasallam) from whose ocean of knowledge and light the Ulama of the Ummat inherit; to thereby guide humanity till the Day of Judgment.

The "*Ma'aarif-E-Mathnawi* is a commentary by Hazrat Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (damat barakaatuhum) of a selection of chapters from the famous masterpiece of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), entitled "*Mathnawi-E-Rum*", which is composed of some 28 000 verses of poetry. Letters and comments from great luminaries and scholars of Islam and in addition, the appreciation and recommendation by such personages of Muhadditheen (the commentators of Hadith), *Mufassireen* (the commentators of Qur'an) and the great scholars, clearly indicate the distinction of the author and the esteem in which he is held.

In this time and age, materialistic prosperity is the principal aspiration, and unfortunately surpasses religion in terms of chief priority. Life revolves entirely around carnal and sensual pleasures - thus, the purpose of life itself has been forgotten and the gift of life wasted. The beautiful character traits pertaining to human excellence including shame, modesty, honesty, sincerity, trustworthiness, generosity, kindness etc. are presently at their lowest ebb. Hearts have become veiled in darkness, permeated with evil desires and passions and filled with malice, greed, pride, envy, and jealousy. In satisfying these cravings of the carnal self, both the heart and the soul are foolishly exchanged for that which is ephemeral and perishable.

The translation of the "*Ma'aarif-e-Mathnawi*" into the English language and its publication in such desperate times is indeed a

great boon for the Ummah. Maulana Yusuf Karan of Cape Town has ably rendered the translation.

A study of the contents of the book with an open mind and with a sincere intention of following the advises and teachings of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) , as well as that of the author of the commentary, Arifbillah Hazrat Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (damat barakaatuhum), would be most instrumental in transforming the sensual and worldly love to the pure, pristine, selfless and healthy love of Allah Ta'ala and His beloved Rasul (sallellaho alaihe wasallam). It is in reality the prescription and the panacea for the maladies and evils predominant in society today.

It will rekindle the flickering flame of Imaan and transform it into a sound faith in Allah Ta'ala, His Exalted Status, His Power over all things, His Compassion, His Mercy and His Kindness. Likewise, it will strengthen the Imaan in His Wrath and Anger over those who are persistently and heedlessly indulging in sins, with no thought of sincere repentance. In essence, to rebuild that intimate, sincere and lasting relationship with Allah Ta'ala, which is the foundation for true success in both the worlds; this book is indeed a great gift. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) life and works have been covered in this volume by the author. It would not be out of place to mention that the "*Mathnawi*" of Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) has inspired and illuminated the hearts of millions of people since it was written and has been extensively quoted by our pious Ulama and Auliya.

May Allah Ta'ala reward all the brothers and the sisters abundantly both in this world and in the Hereafter, for their voluntary assistance rendered solely for His Pleasure.

(Maulana) Yunus Patel
(Naazim) Isha' atul Haq
22 Zil Hijjah 1417 Corresponding to 30 April 1997
Durban, South Africa

INTRODUCTION

I had great love, admiration and connection with Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and his Mathnawi even before I reached the age of maturity. Later Allah Ta'ala blessed me with a Shaikh who also happened to be a great lover of the Mathnawi. He would say:
"The Mathnawi is filled with burning love and ignites the fire of love in the hearts of its readers."

My Shaikh, Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe) would teach the Mathnawi daily to his class after Asr Salaah presenting it in such a manner that it would create a sensation in the hearts of the listeners.
I have acquired much spiritual blessings from the Mathnawi and even in my other books like *Ma'arifat-e-Ilahiyyah*, etc. The blessings of the Mathnawi are most glaring. Sometimes, I used to quote some lines from the Mathnawi to Hazrat Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and used to explain the meanings with which I had been inspired. He would become very happy and tearful on hearing my expositions. One day, a strange condition came over me. I was sitting in his presence after Fajr Salaah and, having sought his permission, began expounding a commentary on some verses of Mathnawi. Hazrat Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe) listened with great attention until eleven 0' clock i.e. for five hours continuously, he listened to my heartfelt commentary. During the explanation, a strange emotional state overtook us, so much so that both Hazrat Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and I wept.

وہ چشمِ ناز بھی نظر آتی ہے آج نم

اب تیرا کیا خیال ہے اے انتہائے غم

"The eye of the beloved too is in tears today
O extreme sigh! Now what is your view?"

Due to my heart-felt connections and love for the Mathnawi, it had always been my wish that Allah Ta'ala should enable me to pen down the knowledge and wisdom contained therein; in such a manner that the love for Allah Ta'ala and the longing for Him would also be created in the hearts of the readers.

من بہر جمعیتے نالاں شدم

جفت خوشحالاں وبد حالاں شدم

My duty will be to explain the love of Allah Ta'ala to all and sundry. Thereafter whosoever has been chosen for it, and who is found befitting and suitable to receive this Divine Love, will become incline towards it and it will become a "Sadaqah Jariyyah" (act of recurring reward) for me.

بن کے دیوانہ کریں گے خلق کو دیوانہ ہم

بر سر منبر سنائیں گے ترا افسانہ ہم

"Having fallen madly in love (with Allah Ta'ala), we will make all mankind mad (in His love)
From the pulpit, we will narrate the tale of Thy love."

All praise is due to Allah Ta'ala. It is through the great bounty, blessings and Dua'as of both Hazrat Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and Hazrat Abraar ul Haq Saheb (Rahmatullah Alaihe) that the Ma'aarif-e-Mathnawi has been completed and has become an invitation towards love for Allah Ta'ala. All Praise is due to Allah Ta'ala for it.

Further, in the editing and revising of the manuscript, Maulana Sayyed Muhammad Ishrat Jameel has done an excellent piece of work. Hence, I request the reader to make dua'a for me, for our parents, our teachers, our Shaikhs, our loved ones and all those who assisted us, that Allah Ta'ala pardon us all and that He accept this book as a means for our salvation.

وَمَا ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ

"And that is not difficult for Allah Ta'ala"

Lastly, through Allah Ta'ala's grace, this lowly author's book, which consists of couplets on the scale and rhyme of Maulana Rumi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) Mathnawi, has also become quite popular. It is printed at the back of this volume under the name Mathnawi-e-Akhtar. Our elders have shown a keen liking for these lines of poetry as can be seen from the comments made by them. May Allah Ta'ala through His Grace and through the intermediary of His Beloved Rasul (sallellaho alaihe wasallam) accept this endeavor and enable this book to become a beneficial gift to the Muslim Ummah and may He make it a Sadaqah Jariyyah on my behalf.

Muhammad Akhtar
Khanqah Imdadiya Ashrafiya
Gulshan Iqbal
Karachi, Pakistan

Short Biography of Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe)

Maulana Rumi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) name was Muhammad and his title was Jalaluddin but generally, he became known as Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe). He was born in the town of Balkh in 604 A.H. and belonged to the family of Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radhiallaho Anho). His father's name was Bahauddin bin Hussain Balkhy. Muhammad Khwarizm Shah Balkhy (d 617) was his maternal grandfather. In 610 A.H. Maulana's father, Bahauddin, left Balkh and settled in Neyshapur. On arrival at Neyshapur, his father took him to the famous saint; Khawaja Fariduddin Attar (Rahmatullah Alaihe). Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was then 6 years old. Khawaja Fariduddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe) gave them a copy of his Mathnawi as a present and said to his father,
"Do not be negligent of this able one. He will one day make his voice heard. "

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) acquired his initial instructions from his father. The father chose his foremost student and Mureed to be a teacher and mentor to the young boy and in this manner, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) studied most of the branches of knowledge under this student, Maulana Burhanuddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe). At the age of eighteen years, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) got married and in that same year, he went with his father to settle in Qunya, Turkey.

When Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was twenty-five years old, his father passed away. Maulana, then, went to Syria for the sole purpose of completing his studies. For some time, Maulana stayed at the Madrassa Jaladiya in Halb (Alepo) where he also sought the spiritual guidance and blessings of Kamaluddin bin Adeem (Rahmatullah Alaihe). Thereafter, for seven years, he studied in Damascus all the Mazaahib, Ilmul Kalaam, Fiqah and acquired knowledge of all the differences of opinions in Deeni matters. He was also highly qualified in

philosophy and *Tasawwuf* . After the death of his father, Sayed Burhanuddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was his mentor on the path of *Tariqat* for nine years. Thereafter he spent the rest of his life teaching and lecturing.

Second Phase of Maulana Rumi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) Life

A complete transformation came over Maulana's life from the moment he came into contact with Hazrat Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe). Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was from a pious family, which belonged to the *Ismaili* sect. He left his family's sectarian connections, acquired knowledge and became a mureed of Baba Kamaluddin Jundy (Rahmatullah Alaihe). In the company of the merchants, he used to travel from place to place. Once he made a dua'a: "O Allah Ta'ala, grant me the companionship of such a person who will be able to bear my company". In reply to this dua'a, the good news was given to him: "Go to Rum". He immediately set forth and soon reached Qunya (Turkey) where he arrived at a place of brass goods sellers. There was a platform whereupon the leaders used to sit. It was at this place that the meeting between Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) took place and from where their friendship and companionship commenced. From that day onwards, a complete change came over Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and the fire of Divine love was kindled in his heart.

He avoided 'Sima'a, the listening to musical renderings. He also left teaching, lecturing and preaching. But he did not leave the company of Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) even for a little while.

However, a great commotion took place in the town with the result that Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) secretly left for Damascus. This caused Maulana tremendous sadness. After some time, some people noticing Maulana's

discomfort and uneasiness went to call Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) back. But after staying for a short while, he again disappeared to an unknown destination. Although they searched for him, he could not be found. Some historians are of the opinion that he had been martyred. After the disappearance of Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) suffered tremendous uneasiness, restlessness and loneliness. It was during this troubled period that he once happened to pass by the shop of Salahuddin Zarkoob who was busy beating metal into thin leaves. At that moment, a strange condition came over Maulana. Salahuddin did not stop beating the leaves and thus many leaves were lost. Finally, Salahuddin allowed the shop to become squandered away and he joined the company of Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe). In this manner, he spent nine years with Maulana. Through this companionship, Maulana was greatly consoled.

In 664A.H., Salahuddin passed away and after his death Maulana chose Husamuddin Chulpi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) from among his mureeds to be his companion for as long as he lived. Thereafter, Maulana consoled his heart through this new companionship. Maulana used to respect and honor Husamuddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe) to such an extent that people were under the impression that he was Maulana's spiritual guide. It was through the encouragement of Maulana Husamuddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe) that Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) wrote the famous Mathnawi Shareef.

Maulana Rumi's Sickness and Death

In 672 A.H., a strong earthquake shook Qunya and for 40 days thereafter the after-shocks were felt. Maulana used to say that the earth was hungry and wanted a morsel. A few days thereafter, Maulana became ill. Some very good physicians were called to treat him but to no avail and without success. On

Sunday, the fifth of Jamad-as-Thani 672, at the time of sunset, Maulana passed away.

The Janaza left the next morning. Everybody from the king to the poorest soul accompanied the funeral. People were so emotional that they even broke the coffin in which the body was being transported for the sake of attaining blessings. The Janaza reached the graveyard by the evening. Shaikh Sadruddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe), a mureed of Shaikh Akbar Muhyuddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe) together with his mureeds also followed the Janaza. He was appointed to lead the funeral prayer but as he stood ready to do so, he uttered a cry and fell unconscious. Thereafter, Qadi Sirajuddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe) led the funeral prayers.

In accordance with the will of Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), Hazrat Husamuddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe) became the Khalifah after him. Maulana left two sons; Ala-uddeen Muhammad and Sultan Wala. In 684 A.H., Hazrat Husamuddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe) also passed away and the next appointed Khalifah was Sultan Wala.

Maulana's Writings

Among Maulana's writings is a compilation of his sayings under the title: *Feehi maa Feehi*". Then there is an anthology of 50,000 couplets which many people mistakenly consider to be the work of Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe). The third writing is the 'Mathnawi' through which Maulana is kept alive today. It seems proper at this stage to mention some of the special features of this most famous work so as to have an insight into it.

Specialties of the Mathnawi

Towards the end of the Ghaznawi Empire, Hakeem Sinai (Rahmatullah Alaihe) wrote a book, "Hadeqah" which was the first book written on Tasawwuf in a poetic form. After that, Hazrat Fariduddin Attar (Rahmatullah Alaihe) wrote

many ***Mathnawis*** among which the most famous one was "Mantiqut tayyar". One day while Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was in a special state of ecstasy, he involuntarily uttered the first lines from the Mathnawi. Husamuddin Chalpi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) heard it and insisted that Maulana should continue with it and complete the Mathnawi. The result was that six volumes were written. During the period of writing, there were many lapses of time. Hence, we find quite a few couplets which were written wherein Husamuddin Chalpi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was the cause for it being written. In some volumes, Maulana has given a very good reason for the delay in writing, as for example:

مدتے ایں مثنوی تاخیر شد   مہلتے بایست تاخوں شیر شد

تا نزاید بخت نوفرزند نو   خوں نگردو شیر شیریں خوش شنو

"For quite some time, this Mathnawi has been delayed
It takes time for blood to become milk.
Until you are not blessed with another baby
The blood (in the body of the mother) will not transform into sweet milk."

The Mathnawi was commenced in 662 A.H.

Writing Style

When writing on academic and ethical matters, one way of writing is to discuss one specific mas-ala (rulings of Shariah) separate from the others and at the same time to mention similar topics under one heading and division. Another manner is to write a story, thereafter deduce from it various rulings of Shariat and provide explanation thereof by which the topic under discussion settles in the mind and one does not lose interest thereof. This is the style which Maulana has adopted in writing the Mathnawi. Maulana himself says:

"O Brother this story is like a shell
And the meaning in it is like a seed (in the shell)".

Of all the books written in Persian on Tasawwuf and ethics, no other book discusses such delicate and intricately sensitive issues, which are abundant in the Mathnawi. Mathnawi is not only a book on Tasawwuf and ethics; it also deals with dogma and metaphysics. Whether it deals with ruling pertaining to Tasawwuf or on matters of dogma, these are explained in such a manner by way of examples, similes and metaphors that no ground is left for rejection. The most complicated rulings are clarified and made simple and comprehensible. Not a single "mas'ala" of the important points pertaining to Tasawwuf and to ilmul Kalaam has been ignored.

Mathnawi has been composed in 'Ramal' (a poetical method) that is hexagon curtailed. Its singular scale and beat is "Fa'ilatun, Fa'ilatun Fa'ilun" twice. In this Mathnawi, there is a melodious nature in the words and letters used, uniqueness in the expression and clarity in its measure. Apart from that, the spiritual blessings, the effect, and the ecstatic feelings experienced in reading it are quite overwhelming.

Summary of the Life of Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe)

- The author Muhammad Jalaluddin known as Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was born in Balkh in the year 604 A.H.
- He was the son of Shaikh Bahauddin bin Hussain Balkhi (Rahmatullah Alaihe). He was the grandchild of Muhammad Khwarizm Shah (Rahmatullah Alaihe).
- At the age of six, he departed from Balkh with his father and at the age of 18, he got married at a place known as Larnad.
- In that same year, he settled in Qunya and at the age of 25, he went to Syria for the purpose of furthering his education.

- In 642 A.H., he became a mureed of Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) in Qunya.
- In 662 A.H., he commenced the writing of the Mathnawi
- On Sunday, the 5 Jamad-as-Thani, 672 A.H. at the time of sunset he passed away.
- He was buried in Qunya at the age of 68 years.
- He left behind two sons, Ala-uddin Muhammad and Sultan Wala.

The Mathnawi-an inspired writing

An indication that the Mathnawi Sharif is an inspired writing is given in the following verse (which is the last verse of Mathnawi):

چوں فتاد از روزن دل آفتاب

ختم شد واللہ اعلم بالصواب

"When the sun went down through the horizon of the heart, It (the Mathnawi) ended, and only Allah Ta'ala knows best about the truth (of the matter)."

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says that the channel through which the celestial hidden knowledge had been coming, that spiritual sun has now, through the infinite wisdom of Allah Ta'ala, disappeared below the horizon of the heart. In other words, manifestation has changed to a state of concealment as is experienced by the saintly ones who have recognized Allah Ta'ala. In fact, the state of concealment has some additional advantages.

When the sun of inspiration, across the heart's outlet, set below the horizon, this book came to an end. And Allah Ta'ala alone knows best what particular wisdom can be in a particular affair at a given time. Since Allah Ta'ala alone knows the wisdom and He acts accordingly, obviously, the wisdom lies in

that which He did. Therefore, I will not pretend to speak any further, instead, will terminate the Mathnawi here.

At this point, Hazrat Hakeem-ul-Ummat Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) has written an important note that the friend of Allah Ta'ala should always talk as the occasion and the time demands, i.e. when he is in the right mood, the audience is attentive and the flow of the heavenly cognizance is natural with moderation, neither forcing himself nor being overpowered by emotions. With this state of mind, one should engage himself in benefiting the people then and there. Hazrat Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was inspired by the following verse:

"When (your beloved master) orders you to speak, then speak and (speak) with fervor. " And if He says: "No! Then do not speak and observe (total) silence."

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) had foretold that after him shall come a '*Light of Soul*' who would complete this Mathnawi (i.e. its sixth unfinished part) which has been mentioned in the following verses:

"The commentary on this (story) remains unfinished, but the innermost has been closed and nothing more is coming forth (now).
The remainder of this story is going to be said, speechlessly, unto the heart of someone who would possess soul-sight."

Accordingly, that man of 'sighted-soul' became Hazrat Mufti Ilahi Baksh Kandelhawi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) by the grace of Allah Ta'ala. It was he who witnessed on his (blessed) soul the inspirations of the soul of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and was subsequently able to complete the Mathnawi; as Mufti Kandelhawi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), through your illuminations you have dominated my soul in such a manner that I lost my very existence. As if you were a lion of

the Almighty Allah Ta'ala who has annihilated my very being."

Mufti Saheb is trying to say that in accordance with Maulana Rumi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) foretelling of the completion of the sixth part of Mathnawi, Maulana Rumi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) holy soul is busy inspiring my soul with Divine Guidance, therefore the pronouncements of my tongue, would actually be the speech of Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe). Like a poet has said:

گرچہ قرآن از لب پیغمبر است

ہر کہ گوید نگفت او کافر است

"Although the Holy Quran has come through the blessed lip of the Messenger, whosoever says it is not the word of Allah Ta'ala is a disbeliever."

Mufti Ilahi Baksh (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was a man of the 12th century while Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) lived in the 7th century (of the Islamic calendar). Mufti Ilahi Baksh (Rahmatullah Alaihe) had completed his Islamic Studies (Shariah) under Shah Abdul Aziz Dhelawi (Rahmatullah Alaihe)

مبارک تجھے اے مری آہِ مضطر

کہ منزل کو نزدیک تر لا رہی ہے

"Congratulations! O my restless sigh!
You are bringing the destination (union with Allah Ta'ala) closer and closer."

(Arifbillah Hazrat e Aqdas Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (Damat Barakaatuhum)

The Meeting of Maulana Rumi and Hazrat Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihim)

In the words of (Maulana) Hakeem Akhtar (Saheb):

Listen dear friends to the story of Maulana Rumi
Who was generally involved with teaching.

While being unaware of the ways of the path (Sulook).
Being involved with external knowledge at all times,

His lecturing pursuits had become famous all around,
While for him hard was the contact with the path.

For arrogance through knowledge keeps the men of knowledge
Far away from Allah Ta'ala.

Object of all knowledge is to attain Divine Love
Apart from that all is mere conceit.

But him on whom Allah Ta'ala's Grace shines,
One day he will become Allah Ta'ala's favorite.

In this way Allah Ta'ala's Grace shone on Maulana Rumi
And from the unseen, Allah Ta'ala's help reached him.

All achievements are achieved through Divine Grace
And without His favor nothing is accomplished

From the unseen world, Rumi was chosen.
As Shams Tabrezi prayed to the Lord:

"Lord, this fire of love burning in my heart,
This restless longing which lies within me,

This fire of truth which is buried in my heart
And all that was granted to me.

O Lord, let there be such a bondsman of Thy
Who in true fashion will be suitable to inherit.

That his heart may become filled with Truth
And that I may fill his being with pearls of wisdom.

Let me find such an heir who will be able to
bear the burden of the fire of love in him.

For the burning love within myself
Is like the Mount Tur of love in the heart.

Lord, near indeed is for me the time of parting
To whom shall I leave this trust O Beloved?"

From the unseen came the immediate reply:
"O Shams Tabrezi, hasten towards Rum.

Go and make Maulana Rumi the Master of Rum.
Let him become unoccupied with the affairs of Rum.

"Thus at the command of the unseen Shams proceeded
Towards Rum as commanded from on High.

As he cast his sight upon Maulana Rumi,
Unconscious he fell down on the path.

Forgotten were the robes of knowledge.
Hungry and thirsty was he to be successful on the path.

At one time Maulana Rumi was known
As a man of dignity and splendor.

The one endowed with the special connections of Khwarizm Shah
And also endowed with being a Master of knowledge.

Whenever he had to go anywhere,
Speedily was brought for him the royal 'sedan'.

And ready for him were soldiers, servants and students
Who in honor and respect accompanied him.

He was used to having his hands and feet kissed
And on all sides he used to be crowded.

Today he fell down unconscious.
Through Divine Love, he discarded all signs of pomp and splendor.

What a glance was thrown on him by Shams Tabrezi
And through that he became a leader of the Path.

When the Pir of Rum regained consciousness,
He followed the footsteps of Shams Tabrezi

Taking his Shaikh's bedding on his head as he walked
The humility of Love has he bought.

When does Divine Love keep a transitory world,
All that became lost in the dust.

For the honor of Divine Love is everlasting honor
And its ecstasy is ecstasy forever.

And upon Jalaluddin Rumi there was
The full effect of the influence of Shams Tabrezi

And Shams Tabrezi filled the heart of Rumi
With burning love and conviction.

From the hands of the Shaikh whatever bounty he found
The Mathnawi is filled with gratitude for that.

Look from what to what Shams transformed Rumi,
Through their liaison and company wonders resulted.

Such an effect was had on the Pir Rumi
As he explains in Mathnawi without any fear.

That Shams Tabrezi was a light complete.
He was the sun and he was the light of truth.

In the Mathnawi, the fire of Tabrezi burns.
The meanings are Tabrezi, the words Rumi's.

What did Rumi acquire from the hands of Tabrezi?
Ask this of Rumi himself.

But I say, O my friends,
Search for it yourself in the Mathnawi.

AKHTAR'S THOUGHTS

One day my ship will also cast (its) anchor
One day we will passionately see Makkah and Madinah.

Although the mine of love is in every heart,
However, it cannot be discovered without blood and sweat apart.

Good God! These blossoming springs of ebullition of love,
My bosom feels like a river of fire.

O tears of repentance! May I be sacrificed over your favors,
This treasure of mercy has rained upon a sinner.

The condition (of success) is (some) kind attention of the men of love,
Otherwise this gem of love cannot be attained .

Akhtar! I do agree, that there are calamities in the path of love,
But through His grace, Tranquility descends as well.

PART ONE

این کتاب درد دل اے دوستاں

کردہ ام تالیف بہر عاشقاں

This book of deep-hearted pain, O friends I have written solely for the (true) lovers

خون دل بر ہر ورق زاریدہ ام

درد دل بر ہر ورق نالیدہ ام

On every page I have shed the blood of my heart on every page I have cried of my heartache (in the love of Allah Ta'ala)

بردہ از درد نہاں بیروں کنم

درد دل در عاشقاں افزوں کنم

I have removed the veil from a hidden ache, thereby increasing the pain in the hearts of lovers (of Allah Ta'ala)

The Story of Hazrat Jaafar Al-Tayyar (Radhiallaho Anho)

روبہے کہ ہست اوراشیر پشت

بشکند کلّہ پلنگاں را بمشت

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) states: "It is a well known fact that the fox is noted for its cowardice." However, the fox that has a lion as a support behind its back saying to him: "Fear not, my hand is upon your back", in spite of lacking courage, becomes very brave indeed. His newfound bravery is of such a nature that he will not hesitate to attack a leopard. He now has the support of a lion at his side, he will show no fear for a leopard. Similarly, is the case of the chosen servants of Allah Ta'ala. In spite of their apparent weakness and distressed position, they show no fear in the face of a multitude of evil forces. These saintly ones do experience some natural fear of physical hurt or injury, but at heart, they have no fear of anyone besides Allah Ta'ala. A Sufi says:

رخ زرین من منگر کہ پائے آہنیں دارم

چہ می دانی کہ در باطن چہ شاہے ہمنشیں دارم

"O people! Look not upon my weakly countenance for I have legs of iron. Do you know that within my heart I am connected to the King of kings."

In this regard, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) tells the story of Hazrat Jaafar. Once Hazrat Jaafar (Radhiallaho Anho) attacked a fortress all by himself. His attack was so fierce that it seemed that the fortress would soon become a prey to the hoofs of his horse. The inmates of the fortress were so struck by awe that they closed the gates of the fortress and no one dared to come out to engage in battle with him. The king discussed with

his Wazir as to what line of action to adopt. The Wazir advised him thus:
"The best line of action is to cancel all plans of making war against the man. It is best to take your shroud and your sword, go to him and lay down your weapons".
The king replied: "But this man is all alone. How is it that you give me such advice?" The Wazir informed him: "Do not underestimate his being one man only. Open your eyes and look at the fortress and see how it trembles like quick silver. Look at the inmates of the fortress, and see how their heads are bent downwards like sheep. Even though the man is alone, the heart that he has in his bosom is not like the hearts of ordinary men. Look at his courage. In the face of a vast multitude of opponents, he challenges them into battle with a naked sword in his hand and in a confident and victorious manner, calls them to fight. It seems that all the battle forces of the East and West are with him. One man alone, but he appears like hundreds of thousands. Do you not see that whichever soldiers are sent out to fight him are soon seen lying under the hoofs of his horse? After seeing the valor of this solitary man, O king, I have realized that the multitude of soldiers, which are with you, will not be able to do anything against him. Do not rely upon numbers. The main thing is the unity of the heart and this is actually what is so striking about the heart of this man. In this respect, he has been endowed endlessly with it. This is a gift from Allah Ta'ala, which is attained through the acquisition of contact with Him and through rigorous spiritual exercises. This connection you will not be able to attain while you are in this state of Kufr. Hence, it is best for you to throw down your weapons in defeat before the courageous believer and to open the gates of the fortress, because your numerous soldiers are of no use."

Then Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) gives examples in which the majority becomes useless in front of minority:

One

Millions of stars are shining and produce light, but at the rising of the sun, their light becomes nonexistent.

Two

If a thousand mice were to attack a weak and sickly cat, it would appear that they would be victorious in their endeavor. A few of them can grab him by the neck. One or two of them can then take his eyes out. One or two of them can tear off his ears with their teeth. One or two of them can make an opening at his side, enter and begin chewing the internal organs. It would appear to be a reasonable plan. However, experience proves otherwise. As soon as the weak and sickly cat utters one "meow" the whole multitude of mice become awestruck and one by one, they flee to safety. The moment they hear the "meow" they become convinced of being vanquished and visualizing the actions of the cat's teeth and paws makes them flee.

The main reason for this is the difference between the hearts in the breast of the mice and the heart in the breast of the cat. The unity of the heart in the cat and the courage lying in it, is not found in the mice. Hence, the mice becoming confounded and defeated in the presence of the cat, is proof thereof that the cat possesses unity of heart and courage. Otherwise, it would appear that if a large number of mice should attack the cat, it will be impossible for the cat to escape.

Hence, we conclude that even if the number of mice were a hundred thousand, still, seeing a weak and sickly cat will cause all of them to run away. This proves that numbers mean nothing. The main thing is unity of the heart and courage.

Three

Sheep and goats may be numerous in number but in the face of the knife of the butcher, that number is of no consequence.

Four

Sleep comes along and causes many thoughts and imaginations to vanish.

Five

The lion in the forest courageously attacks a multitude of animals with horns and he alone gets the upper hand over them. Furthermore, whichever animal he chooses from among them, he eats.

Lesson

Allah Ta'ala, the King of kings, is the One who grants this unity of heart and such courage. This unity of the heart is of two kinds. One is natural, or common possessed by the Non Believers, polytheists, and even animals. The other form is that which is granted by Allah Ta'ala and comes about through the blessings of close contact with Allah Ta'ala. This is what the Sufis term as "Nisbat", for which one has to strive. It is a great favor from Allah Ta'ala to have contact with Him. And there is only one way of attaining this contact and that is by following the Shari'at.

The Story of Sultan Mahmood Ghaznawi (Rahmatullah Alaihe)

One night Sultan Mahmood went walking among his subjects after taking off his royal clothes and putting on ordinary clothes. He came upon a group of thieves who were consulting amongst themselves. On seeing him, they asked him, "Who are you?" The king (Sultan) replied: "I am also one like yourselves". They understood that to mean that he was also a thief like themselves and allowed him to join their company. They, then, continued the conversation amongst themselves. It was decided that each one of them would explain his specialty/skill that he possessed so that at the time of need, a task could be put before accordingly.

One of the thieves said:

"Friends, I have a special gift in my ears, that whenever a dog barks, I fully understand what he says."

The second one said:

"I have a special gift in my eyes, that whatever I see in the darkness of night, I am able to recognize it in the light of day."

The third one said:

"I have this specialty in my arms that through the strength that lies in my arms, I can make a hole in the strongest wall, to enter a house."

The fourth one said:

"I have a special gift in my nose that by smelling the sand on the ground I am able to ascertain whether there is any treasure buried underneath it or not." It is just like in the case of Majnoon, who without being told, merely by smelling the ground, got to know where Layla was buried.

The fifth one said:

"I have such strength in my hands that no matter how high a building is, I can climb along its walls with my rope ladder and easily enter into it."

Thereafter they all asked the king, "O Man, what special gift do you possess which we can make use of in our thieving activities?" The king replied,

مجرماں راچوں بجلّاداں دہند

چوں بجنبد ریش من ایشاں دہند

"I have this specialty in my beard that when criminals are handed over to their executioner, I merely shake my beard and they are immediately set free".

In other words, if as a show of mercy I shake my beard, the criminals found guilty of murder, are set free. On hearing this, the thieves said:

قوم گفتندش کہ قطب ماتوئی

روز محنت ہاخلاص ماتوئی

"O you are our leader, on the day of difficulty; you will be our only means of salvation."

In other words, if we are arrested, then through your blessings we will be saved. Now we do not have to fear, because the rest of us had the special gifts that would help us in our thieving exploits, but none of us had the means of granting safety from punishment. This specialty lies only with you. Now we need not have any fear of punishment. Now we can get on with our work.

They all went in the direction of the palace of Shah Mahmood with the king in their midst. Along the way, a dog barked and the one who understood the dog's language translated: "The king is also in your midst". Although they heard it, no one paid any attention to this information, as their greed was uppermost in their minds. One of them smelled the ground and explained that this is the Royal Palace. There is a treasure in this place. The other one threw a rope ladder against the wall. The other one made a hole in the wall and they all entered to rob. Afterwards, they divided the loot amongst themselves and hastily each one of them went to hide his share of the spoils. The king noted each one's description and found out where each of them resided. He left them and secretly re-entered the Royal Palace.

The following day the king related the entire story to his courtiers. Thereafter he sent the policemen to arrest them and to inform them of their death sentence. When they were brought before the court with hands bound together, they were all trembling in fear before the king's throne. However, the thief who had this special gift of recognizing anybody during the day whom he had seen during the darkness, was quite at ease. In him, together with the signs of fear there were also signs of hope. In other words, although he was struck by awe while standing before the king and although fearing the king's wrath and revenge, he also had the hope, that the king would be true to his word, that when in mercy he shakes his beard, criminals will be set free. Furthermore, he also had the hope of setting

free all his companions because the king will surely not turn away from all those whom he knew and recognized.

This person's face was changing from yellow to red, as within himself the feelings of fear and hope alternated. Sultan Mahmood, in kingly dignity, passed judgment that they all should be handed over to the executioner to be hung on the gallows. As the king himself was witness to their crime, there was no need for any other witnesses. As soon as the king announced his judgment, this person appealed in great humility: "Sire, with your permission, may I say something?" The king permitted him to speak and he said, "O Master, each one of us had exhibited his special gift which helped in this crime. Now, it is time that the kingly specialty should be exhibited according to the promise. I have all the while recognized you. Remember you promised that in your beard there is this specialty, that if you cause it to move in mercy, the criminal will be saved from punishment. Hence, O king, shake your beard, so that through the blessings of your grace, all of us may be saved from punishment. Our specialties have brought us to the gallows. Now it is only your special gift that is left which can save us from being punished. Now is the time for the exhibition of your specialty. Kindly shake your beard. Because of fear, our lives have reached right up to our mouths. Please save us by the special gift that lies in your beard. "

Sultan Mahmood smiled at the plea and became filled with mercy and grace as he heard this pitiful admission of guilt. He said, "Each one of you have exhibited his special quality to such an extent that it has brought you to the brim of destruction, except in the case of this one. He recognized me as the Sultan. He saw me in the darkness of the night and recognized me as the Sultan. Hence, for his having recognized me, I set all of you free. I feel ashamed at those eyes which recognized me not to shake my beard and thereby exhibit my special quality".

Lesson

1. When a person is committing a sin, the True King of kings is with him, and is fully aware of all that he does.

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ

"And He is with you wherever you are." (Qur'an)

When a person commits any disobedience to Allah Ta'ala, he is actually committing treachery against Him. Anyone who fails in his duty to Allah Ta'ala or in the rights that are due to men is like a thief committing theft of Allah Ta'ala's treasures. For this reason, one should always bear in mind that the Master is the witness, watching all time, and is aware of all that we do. If we commit any disobedience or inequity, it means that in His very presence, His treasury is being looted and robbed.

Think for a moment! Whom are you robbing? That King and Master tells you "I am watching what you do. I am with you. My laws have been revealed to you. Today you are breaking that law. Today, in this world I will hide your fault, hoping that perhaps you will come upon the right path. But if you do not come to your senses, then tomorrow on the Day of Judgment when you will be brought before Me, with hands bound together, then who will be able to save you from My anger and revenge?"

2. Allah Ta'ala will punish sinners in the Hereafter, although, He may overlook them in this world. We see that at the time the thieves were looting the Royal treasury, the Sultan witnessed the entire incident. He was with them and allowed them to proceed without punishing them. However, in the end, he had them arrested. If, at all times, this thought is uppermost in our minds that Allah Ta'ala sees all our deeds, then, there will surely be fear in the heart when committing sins.

On the Day of Judgment, no special quality will be of any benefit. All those deeds which contravene the laws of Allah

Ta'ala will on the Day of Judgment be bound around man's neck; even though, in this world, they were considered as special qualities. The thieves mentioned those special gifts and qualities as if they were qualities of virtue, but in reality, those very qualities were the cause of their destruction:

ہر یکے خاصیتے خود وانمود

ایں ہنرہا جملہ بد بختی فزود

"Each one of them exhibited their special quality,
But all their qualities only caused their misfortune to increase".

3. Any special quality that does not bring a person closer to his Creator, does not connect the heart with Allah Ta'ala, and which is not a medium towards the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala is no quality of virtue. In fact, it is a curse and a misfortune. All the powers and attributes of man that are used in rebellion against Allah Ta'ala and towards disobedience and negligence, will one day cause him to be brought before Allah Ta'ala as a criminal.

   All those nations that have made great progress and through scientific inventions have made this world subservient to them, but turn away from Allah Ta'ala, passing their lives in disobedience, will realize on the Day of Judgment, whether that specialty of scientific progress had been the cause of receiving Allah Ta'ala's grace or His anger.

تسخیر مہر وماہ مبارک تجھے مگر

دل میں اگر نہیں تو کہیں روشنی نہیں

"Blessed be to you the subjugation of the sun and moon, But if there is no light in the heart there is no light anywhere"

4. No special quality will be of benefit except that which allows one to recognize Allah Ta'ala. Just like the person who having seen the Sultan, recognized him and through this special quality, he not only saved himself but was also able to intercede on behalf of his companions. As for his other companions, their special quality became a means of their destruction.

جز مگر خاصیتے آں خوش حواس

کہ بشب بود چشم او سلطان شناس

"Only the sight of the fortunate one was of any use who recognized the Sultan during the darkness of night."

The lesson derived is that this world is like a place of darkness. In the darkness of this world, every servant of Allah Ta'ala who follows the Divine Laws of Shari'at and through its blessings recognizes Allah Ta'ala, will be provided with salvation against the punishment of hell-fire on the Day of Judgment. This recognition will also be a means towards intercession on behalf of other criminals from among the sinners of the people of faith. However, there should not be any pride and over confidence in this recognition. In fact, one should alternate between fear and hope and in utmost humility beg for this intercession. Then Allah Ta'ala will accept this intercession from whomsoever He wishes according to His Mercy. For those whom He will not accept this intercession, He will in perfect justice exhibit His overwhelming vengeance.

Hence, fortunate indeed is the person who, in this world, created within himself the knowledge of recognizing Allah Ta'ala. The Aarifeen (those who have recognized Allah Ta'ala) who through their spiritual efforts and exercises recognize Allah Ta'ala with their souls, will tomorrow on the Day of Judgment see Allah Ta'ala and attain salvation. Furthermore, their intercession on behalf of other sinners will also be accepted. However, the disbelievers and criminals will through their special qualities be admitted into hell-fire. On

that Day these poor starving ones (pious ones) with pale faces, patched and coarse clothing, who today are being ridiculed and jeered at, will feast their eyes upon the countenance of Allah Ta'ala. On that Day, the criminals will envy them:
"Would that we had lived like them in the world and acquired their qualities. Would that we had recognized Allah Ta'ala properly!"

5. This story also illustrates the high position these righteous and saintly ones have as far as their humanity is concerned. What a pity it is that nations and people, just like those thieves, spend their short span of worldly lives looking upon means of delight and comfort as special gifts of accomplishment, and look upon material progress as being actual progress. Whereas on the other hand, they have adopted uncouth habits like urinating while standing and cleansing themselves with toilet paper after defecating. They also consider it normal to take a bath sitting in a tub and allow the water, which has become dirtied through being in contact with the anus to be drawn into their mouth and nose. They consider these actions as the norms of society. Can such people ever be considered cultured and progressive? What a pity! The beloved Islamic norms are being cast aside and such despicable ways are being adopted.

Dua'a

"O Allah Ta'ala, let just rulers be appointed to rule over us, who will introduce Thy Laws, and punish those who neglect salaat, consume alcohol, gamble, commit adultery, steal, etc. Let them punish those women who refuse to observe the rules of pardah. Let him order the closure of cinema houses, prostitution quarters and liquor houses". Ameen.

The Story of the Veiled King

A very handsome saintly person who was initially very greedy for wealth and government position ruled as a king over some part of Arabia. He was a good poet of a very sensitive temperament, involved in sensual love. When Divine love took possession of his heart, he lost all interest in the affairs of the state and gave up sensual love.

The author of ***Qasida-e-Burda*** says:

نَعَمْ سَرٰى طَيْفُ مَنْ اَهْوٰى فَاَرَّقَنِيْ

وَالْحُبُّ يَعْتَرِضُ اللَّذَّاتِ بِالْاَلَمِ

"When at night the thought of my beloved enters my mind, then for the entire night sleep flies away and all pleasures turn to sorrow."

Finally, he woke up one night, wrapped a shawl around himself, covered his face and left his Sultanate. At that time, Divine Love had taken possession of his heart and the hustle and bustle of government, was proving to be a hindrance in the remembrance of the Beloved. The moment had arrived when his patience ran out. He uttered a cry and like a mad man, set forth towards the desert. The sincere cry from this true lover released him from the chains of government. When one initially enters upon this path, the first stages are caused by one becoming attracted to the path. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

دست در دیوانگی باید زدن

زیں خرد جاہل ہمی باید شدن

"Create the bounty of madness in your heart (of His love) Not by intelligence alone will you reach Truth."

(For if, the mind is not enlightened by revelation, it is better to remain an ignorant one.)

A special quality of this Love is that one desires to sit down in solitude and remember his Beloved, which brings great ecstasy. For this reason, the silence of the desert is so well sought after by these true lovers. Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) (sallellaho alaihe wasallam) used to say, "Before I was endowed with Prophethood, solitude was made beloved to me."

Hence, he withdrew himself from all men and looked for solitude in the Cave of Hira, where for several days on end he would spend the time meditating and remembering Allah Ta'ala. Similar was the case of this king. He vacated the throne of his Sultanate and in the middle of the night proceeded towards the desert.

"When Divine Love had its effect,
It made rest and comfort unpleasant.

When he experienced the ecstasy of love (of Allah Ta'ala),
He removed the crown from his head.

He exchanged the royal throne for a life of poverty.
Well done, O True Lover, well done!

This is the case with thousands of kings
Love made them abandon their kingdom and thrones

Ask about the ecstasy of love from him,
Whose heart has been injured by love." (Akhtar)

How can a normal person understand this love and ecstasy? How can they know the pleasure of solitude and the delights of the howling winds in the desert? Ask those true servants of Allah Ta'ala, whose lives have become independent of the pleasures of this temporary world and are enjoying the closeness of Allah Ta'ala in solitude. The pleasure of this solitude is such that thousands of gatherings may be sacrificed for it. It is such a meeting of the True Beloved that it transforms the solitude of the lover into full spring bloom.

Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Saheb (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

معیت گر نہ ہو تیری تو گھبراؤں گلستاں میں

رہے تو ساتھ تو صحرا میں گلشن کا مزہ پاؤں

"If You are not with me, then I feel distressed even in a rose garden
And if You are with me, then I enjoy the taste of a rose garden even in a desert"

In fact, from the silence of the desert he gets the message from his friend.

گیا میں بھول گلستاں کے سارے افسانے

دیا پیام کچھ ایسا سکوت صحرا نے

"I have forgotten all the stories of the rose garden
The silence of the desert has conveyed such a message"

The king commenced traveling over mountains and rivers, over deserts and plains until he was outside the boundaries of his Sultanate and reached Tabouk. He threw a veil over his face so that people would not recognize him: In Tabouk, he suffered starvation and hunger for several days. At last, being reduced to weakness, he went to work with some laborers, who were making bricks. He worked with the veil over his face but from time to time the veil was lifted by the wind and the other laborers became aware of his noble features. In the end, the word spread among the laborers that this veiled one is an ambassador of some country, or perhaps the king of a country. The word spread even further in the land until it reached the king of Tabouk.

The king of Tabouk became worried that an ambassador or a king of another country had joined the laborers to spy on his kingdom and launch an attack after acquiring the secrets of the state. He thought that it would be best to personally investigate the matter. Hence, the king of Tabouk prepared to travel and soon entered the ranks of the laborers, with whom

the veiled king was busy making bricks. The king ordered all the other laborers to move away and then personally removed the veil from the face of the handsome and noble-faced one. The king then addressed the veiled one: "O Handsome One, tell me the truth. Who are you? Your enlightened face informs me that you are the king of some country, but why this poverty? It seems that you have sacrificed your comfort and royalty, for this want and poverty. O Man of courage may my Sultanate of Tabouk and all Sultanates be sacrificed for your courage. Quickly tell me your secret! If you would be my guest, I would indeed consider it my good fortune. I would derive endless pleasure through the nearness of your company".

In this manner, the king of Tabouk spoke to the veiled king who was poorly dressed and appealed to him to relate his true story. However, in spite of the pleasant conversation, the veiled one, instead of revealing his secret, spoke to the king about Divine love, in such a manner, that the heart of the king of Tabouk also became filled with this Divine Love. He too decided to leave his Sultanate and to remain in the company of the veiled one. Then، during the night both of them started walking towards another kingdom in order that the subjects may not worry them and so that the two of them could in solitude remember Allah Ta'ala. They walked for a long way until they entered another kingdom.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says that Divine Love was not responsible for this abandonment of wealth, splendor and power of government, once only. It has happened so many times that a person is prepared to sacrifice wealth and splendor for the sake of Divine Love. Nonetheless, the veiled one who had abandoned his kingdom must have enjoyed great ecstasy in his love of Allah Ta'ala that he also influenced the king of Tabouk to cast aside his kingdom and to adopt a saintly ascetic life, forsaking all worldly comforts and becoming filled with Divine love.

اے سوختہ جاں پھونک دیا کیا مرے دل میں

ہے شعلہ زن اک آگ کا دریا مرے دل میں

"O Love-sick one, what did you blow into my heart
That it is a river of blazing fire passing through my heart. ".
(Khawajah Saheb)

Khawajah Saheb Majzoob (Rahmatullah Alaihe) had written a couplet about his Murshid Hakeem-ul-Ummat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) in which he speaks of this blazing fire of love:

جس قلب کی گرمی نے دل پھونک دئے لاکھوں

اس قلب میں یااللہ کیا آگ بھری ہوگی

"The one whose "sighs of the heart" have burnt numerous hearts,
What a blazing fire must be hidden therein?"

Just as fire spreads from one house to another, so does Divine Love spread from one heart to another. Hazrat Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says that from one heart to another there are secret ways. He goes on to explain this phenomenon of the heart to heart influence with a beautiful example. He says, "Understand the secret unseen ways of heart to heart contact like this:

When two lamps are being lit, the lamps will remain separate but their light will become intermixed. "

In other words, if the lamps are lit, it is impossible to say which light belongs to which lamp. Similarly, the bodies of Mumineen are different, but when they sit together in a gathering the enlightenment (Anwar) from their hearts become as one in the atmosphere of the gathering place. This is one of the reasons why the courier of this Shari'at, the Messenger of Allah Ta'ala, Muhammad (sallellaho alaihe wasallam) gave the advice to the Muslims to have mutual consultation over matters

of importance. Among the other points of wisdom in mutual consultation is that when ten Muslims gather for consultation, then it is like ten lamps burning together in one place and their light being so much stronger than one light, hence in the light of this increased light of Imaan and Yaqeen, the truth is uncovered. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"Consult with the assembly of righteous,
For the Messenger (sallellaho alaihe wasallam) was also ordered to do so.

The minds of men are like lighted lamps, the light of twenty lamps surely gives more light than one. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) further says: "This is also the reason why Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) prohibited monasticism, because by casting aside the world and going to settle alone in a cave in the mountains, the idea of mutual rectification and consultation is lost." He says, "Thus, the Prophet prohibited monasticism and living in solitude in the mountains, so that no one may be deprived of the benefit of mutual contact and blessings acquired through the company of Saintly ones." Allah Ta'ala has placed such healing powers in the sights of some of the saintly ones, that by their mere casting of a glance, an evil doer is transformed into a righteous one, and mischievous ones become doers of good. Judge Akbar Ilahabadi puts it this way:

نہ کتابوں سے نہ وعظوں سے نہ زر سے پیدا

دین ہوتا ہے بزرگوں کی نظر سے پیدا

"Neither from books nor from preaching nor from wealth,
Deen comes alive through the glances of the saintly ones."

Here an objection may be raised, that the story being told here refers to a king who had cast aside his kingdom and the whole world. Is not this also a case of the prohibited monasticism? The answer to this question is this: For the king to discard his throne, to choose a life of poverty and join the poor

laborers is not monasticism. Monasticism means to absolutely avoid all contact with society. The king did not abandon the world, he changed his lifestyle, from that of royal one to that of an ordinary one.
Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) continues with the story saying that the veiled king must have told the king of Tabouk many things regarding Divine Love for him to immediately experience contact with Allah Ta'ala. The king of Tabouk said:

جزاک اللہ کہ چشمم باز کردی

مرا با جان جاں ہمراز کردی

"May Allah Ta'ala reward you well for opening my eyes,
And for having joined me to the true Beloved".

He also told the veiled king: "Take me with you. Your heart is like the fountainhead of the fire of love.

عشق حق کی آگ سے سینہ مرا بھر دیجئے

I beg of you, fill my heart with the fire of Divine Love.

Casting aside your kingdom, joining the ranks of ordinary laborers, making bricks, dressed in garments of poor ones, is a clear proof that you have surely seen within yourself another kingdom, which contains the whole world within itself."

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says that, apart from these two kings, there were many others who discarded their kingdoms for the sake of Divine Love. When the Divine Love struck them, they became victims thereof. It is said that to be killed by Allah Ta'ala's Divine Love once only, is better than to live a thousand lives and for the bondage that comes about after attaining such Love, is worth sacrificing even a thousand kingdoms. When one is struck by such Love, then the body becomes neglected because of the strenuous spiritual exercises but when the great bounty of Nisbat (contact with Allah Ta'ala) is uncovered, one is bound to exclaim:

نیم جاں عشق نے کیا لیکن

ہاتھ میں قرب لازوال ہے آج

"Love has reduced my life by half
But in return I have gained never-ending nearness to Him"

Lesson

The lesson in this story is this:
"O Self, look with insight and in truth,
You will discover that in place of a life of governing,
A life of a dervishi is better."

The Story of Hazrat Sultan Ibrahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe)

Divine love forced Hazrat Ibrahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe) to cast aside the kingdom of Balkh after which for ten years he remained in worship in a cave at Neyshapur. In this way, he acquired the inner kingdom.

ملک دل بہ یا چنیں ملک حقیر

"Is the kingdom of the heart better or the despised kingdom of Balkh?"

There are two main ways of reaching Allah Ta'ala and both of these ways are substantiated from the Holy Quran:

اَللّٰہُ یَجۡتَبِیۡۤ اِلَیۡہِ مَنۡ یَّشَآءُ

1. ***"Allah Ta'ala attracts towards Himself whomsoever He wishes"***

In other words Allah Ta'ala attracts towards Himself those whom He pleases. This is called the manner of Jazb - attraction.

وَيَهْدِىٓ إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُّنِيبُ

2. ***"And He guides towards Himself those who turn to Him in repentance"***

This is called the manner of Sulook (effort).

Sulook is a voluntary act whereas Jazb is involuntary. A person is commanded to adopt the manner of Sulook. But, generally, everyone following the way of Sulook (personal effort) will receive a measure of Jazb (attraction) from Allah Ta'ala as a result of the spiritual rigors he undertakes. Because without any special bounty from Allah Ta'ala, no one can be successful.
In any case, both these ways - Jazb and Sulook, through Allah Ta'ala's grace lead towards the objective and become fruitful for the heart's progress.

ذرہ سایہ عنایت بہتر است

از ہزاراں کوشش طاعت پرست

"A single drop of Allah Ta'ala's Graceful favor
Is more fruitful than a thousand efforts in obedience".

Thus, when Allah Ta'ala's Mercy and favor touched Hazrat Ibrahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe) without him exerting himself in spiritual exercises, the king of Balkh was proved to be successful. He cast aside the kingdom of Balkh, but acquired an inner kingdom which was far better than the whole world. In fact, all the treasures of heaven and earth appear as nothing before it. The king himself did not realize what would be the result of casting aside the fertile and well irrigated lands of his kingdom, for the sake of Divine Love. Initially, he was unable to foresee how worthless pebbles would be replaced with valuable jewels and how a thorn bush would be exchanged for a flower garden. This is what happens when good fortune comes.

سن لے اے دوست جب ایام بھلے آتے ہیں

گھات ملنے کی وہ خود آپ ہی بتلاتے ہیں

***"Listen dear friend, when good days approach
The Beloved himself will inform you of the time and place."***

One night Hazrat Ibrahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was lying asleep on the upper story of his palace, when he suddenly felt someone shaking his leg. He was immediately struck by surprise and wondered who could be so brave as to intrude into the upper story of the king's palace. He asked: "O you arrivals, who are you?" They were a group of angels in human form, who had come from Allah Ta'ala with the aim of bringing about an upheaval in the heart of an unmindful one. The angels answered: "We are here, seeking our lost camel." The king replied: "I am surprised that you search for a lost camel in the upper story of the king's palace." They replied: "We are even more surprised that, in this atmosphere of pomp and comfort, you wish to find Allah Ta'ala".

پس بگفتندش کہ تو بر تخت شاہ

چوں ہمی جوئی ملاقات ازالہ

***"They enquired of him, how is it that you
Seek to meet Allah Ta'ala while sitting on the throne?"***

Having said that the angels disappeared, but they had left such an effect on the king's heart that his heart became disenchanted with his kingdom. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) advises:

ملک را برہم زن ادھم وار زود

تا بیابی ہمچو او ملک خلود

***"O People! Like Ibrahim, say farewell to your kingdom
So that you may acquire the great inner kingdom."***

The result was that he discarded the kingdom and all worldly loves. The author of Qasida-e-Burda says:

نَعَمْ سَرٰى طَيْفُ مَنْ اَهْوٰى فَاَرَّقَنِيْ
وَالْحُبُّ يَعْتَرِضُ اللَّذَّاتِ بِالْاَلَمِ

"Yes when at night the thought of my beloved enters the mind, Sleep flies and all pleasures become changed to sorrow and pain.

Then in the latter part of the night, the king arose from his bed, put a blanket over himself and walked out of his kingdom. One sigh from the heart of burning Divine Love blew away the confined walls of the kingdom which had imprisoned him and Divine madness removed the curtains from his mind.

کھینچی جو ایک آہ تو زنداں نہیں رہا
مارا جو ایک ہاتھ گریباں نہیں رہا

"When he uttered one sigh, his prison vanished
And when madness struck him, his senses flew away".

Having left Balkh, Ibrahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe) proceeded towards the desert of Neyshapur where be engaged himself in Zikr and uttering the cries of true lovers.

نعرۂ مستانہ خوش می آیدم
تا ابد جاناں چنیں می بایدم

"Loved by me are these cries (in Your remembrance),
And till the Day of Judgment, that is all I desire.

جز بہ ذکر خویش مشغولم مکن
از کرم از عشق معزولم مکن

O true Beloved, occupy me not with anything else except Your remembrance

And please tire me not from being filled with Your love.

جان قربت دیدہ را دوری مدہ

یار شب را روز مہجوری مدہ

O Allah Ta'ala, whoever has tasted the pleasure of nearness to Thee,
Let him not ever experience the sorrow of separation.

ذکر حق آمد غذا ایں روح را

مرہم آمد ایں دل مجروح را

The remembrance of Allah Ta'ala is the food for the soul
And remembrance of the beloved is the medicine for the heart injured by love."

For ten years, Ibrahim bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe) dwelt in the desert of Neyshapur, like a mad man, remaining busy with worship. In my Urdu Mathnawi, I have described the incident thus:

"Listen to the story of Ibn Adham,
Who used to be the king of Balkh.

When true love captured his heart,
His Sultanate became a burden to him.

He discarded the kingdom and all wealth and pomp
And adopted a path towards the wilderness.

Filled with sorrow, he remained there,
Cleansing himself and purifying the heart.

For ten years he dwelt there attracted to the Lord.
And night and day Divine Love glowing in him.

In the cave of Neyshapur this pure soul
Remained repeating the name of Allah Ta'ala.

He remained dressed in the attire of the poor
The king of Balkh remained homeless.

He had left aside royalty and all royal comforts
And cut off his relationship with all ease and comforts.

He now only connected himself to the Lord,
While turning the back towards all else.

The love of Allah Ta'ala is not easy O friends!
The love of Allah Ta'ala is not cheap O friends!

Since when does love fear the criticism of critics?
Love does not care if life has to go.

The road of love lurks with dangers
The heart and soul turns to blood in this path.

Very costly is this commodity of love.
The love of Allah Ta'ala is obtained with great sacrifice and many tears.

In the ocean of love, there are waves of blood.
This is not the road of the faint hearted.

Love does not fear humiliation.
Love does not care for fame and name.

The love of Allah Ta'ala alone is the food of the lovers.
The love of Allah Ta'ala alone is the coolness of the hearts of the truthful ones.

He (Bin Adham) discarded the kingdom and covered himself with a blanket
And adorned the garb of poverty.

His kingly pomp was hidden in the blanket of poverty.
Within the blanket of poverty was hidden the glory of the king.

When the body of the king of Balkh
Became infatuated in the love and remembrance of Allah Ta'ala,

He became aware of the taste of being a Dervish
And his heart gained the recognition of Allah Ta'ala.

A question may be asked: If Ibrahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe), for the sake of Allah Ta'ala's love, rejected the throne of

Balkh, was he foolish? The answer is NO. He was not foolish because the kingdom of Balkh and in fact all the worldly kingdoms together, have no importance or weight in the sight of Allah Ta'ala. The true lover of Allah Ta'ala says:

قیمت خود ہر دو عالم گفتئی

نرخ بالا کن کہ ارزانی ہنوز

"O Allah Ta'ala, You have explained Your value being both the worlds. If by giving both the worlds, You are attained, both worlds are nothing in exchange for Your Being.

Even if a person should sacrifice his life for it, then too the full price has not been paid.

کشتنی بہ از ہزاراں زندگی

سلطنت ہا مردئہ ایں بندگی

To be martyred for the sake of Thy Love, is better than a thousand lives and many are the kingdoms to be sacrificed for Thy bondage. "

Hence, we conclude, that the Love of Allah Ta'ala is not cheap. Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) has said:

اَلَآ اِنَّ سِلْعَةَ اللّٰهِ لَغَالِيَةٌ

"Verily the price of (attaining) Allah Ta'ala is very expensive".

When the heart experiences the sweetness and ecstasy of Allah Ta'ala's love, then the beloved life of the lover becomes devoid of any value.

گر بہ بینی یک نفس حسن ودود

اندر آتش افگنی جان و دود

"***If the splendor of the love for the True Beloved is experienced, Then in longing you are prepared to sacrifice life itself***

گر بہ بینی کرّوفر قرب را

جیفہ بینی بعدازیں ایں شرب را

O people, if the heart experiences the splendor of Allah Ta'ala's nearness,
The pleasures of the whole world appear wretched to you."

Hence, on experiencing the ever abiding inner Sultanate which Ibrahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe) acquired after sacrificing the worldly kingdom of Balkh, he would have exclaimed:

ملک دنیا تن پرستاں را حلال

ما غلام عشق و ملک لازوال

"May the Lovers of this world and kingdoms enjoy their world,
Soon it will pass away
But for the True Lover of God, a kingdom that never ends. "

Now, for casting aside such a small world and kingdom, if a person gains such an everlasting kingdom, then what rational being can object to a little discomfort. Similarly, if a great treasure lies buried under the foundations of a house; who will feel sorrow, if that house is demolished to take out the treasure?

قصر چیزے نیست ویراں کن بدن

گنج در ویرانی است اے میر من

"O friend, treasures are generally buried in desolate places.
Hence, destroy the body and its powers to attain it."

In other words, the lustful and illicit cravings of the flesh should be curbed and not be granted obedience. So after destroying those sensual lusts, one may attain nearness to Allah Ta'ala and sound contact with Him, which is the attainment and acquisition of a treasure. The great pleasure which Ibrahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe) attained through Zikr and

worship on the banks of a river in the wilderness, are things which only he could describe.

آه را جز آسماں ہمدم نبود

راز را غیر خدا محرم نبود

"No one save the heavens were aware of his sighs of love and of pain.
And no one save Allah Ta'ala was aware of the secrets of his love."

By choosing solitude himself, Hazrat Ibrahim bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was busy remembering his Lord and Master amidst the sounds of the wilderness. The best places for the Lovers of Allah Ta'ala are those, where none but Allah Ta'ala is aware of their communion with Him.

خوشتر از ہر دو جہاں آنجا بود

کہ مرا باتو سر و سودا بود

"O Beloved, in both worlds, the best place is that where I can prostrate myself upon Thy feet. And wherein I may be sacrificed for Thy love."

The same theme is mentioned by Khawajah Majzoob (Rahmatullah Alaihe) who says:

تمنا ہے کہ ایسی جگہ کوئی کہیں ہوتی

اکیلے بیٹھے رہتے یاد ان کی دلنشیں ہوتی

"I have this intense longing to be in such a place of solitude,
Where I can sit alone and remember Him with my heart,

وہاں رہتے جہاں دود فغاں کا آسماں ہوتا

وہاں بستے جہاں خاکستر دل کی زمیں ہوتی

To reside where the sky is filled with cries and heart-filled sighs of the heart
To remain there where the earth is filled with broken hearts. "

When the lovers of Allah Ta'ala listen to His name being recited, their souls become intoxicated with His love. Maulana Kandhelwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) in his Khaatam-e-Mathnawi says:

نام او چو بر زبانم می‌رود
ہر بن مواز عسل جوئے شود

"O Allah Ta'ala when I mention Thy Name, I feel such sweetness and ecstasy,
That it appears as if rivers of honey are set flowing from every hair of my body."

It is this ecstatic pleasure which causes one to go so far as to discard his very kingdom. Hafiz Shirazi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) puts it this way:

"The remembrance of the Beloved makes the lovers completely oblivious of themselves
And the Zikr of the Beloved makes them unaware of the whole world around them.

In the remembrance of the True One they adopt solitude, staying away from people,
And they become so absorbed in the love of the True One, that no notice is even taken of His material favors, since they are the lovers of Him alone. "

Thus, Sultan Ibrahim Bin Adham's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) most significant favor which he acquired was his closeness to Allah Ta'ala and it is this closeness which made him intoxicated with love and oblivious of everything else. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

گر بہ بینی یک نفس حسن ودود
اندر آتش افگنی جان و دود

"O people, if for just a moment you experience the glory of Allah Ta'ala's nearness,
You will be prepared to sacrifice your precious life in the vigor's of spiritual efforts."

In other words, you will be prepared to undergo severe spiritual efforts for the sake of Allah Ta'ala's pleasure and you will be prepared to accept being a slave of a True Lover, and you will pray in a restless manner: ***Fill my heart with Divine Love.***

چو سلطان عزت علم برکشد
جہاں سر بجیب عدم درکشد

When the True Sultan exhibits His glory and splendor,
The whole world sinks into nothingness. "

In other words, the heart unto which Allah Ta'ala exhibits His glory and splendor, the entire world with all its contents become worthless. The heart that is endowed with special grace and bounty from Allah Ta'ala, and acquires the realization of the mortality of this world, thus, making it easy to undergo rigorous spiritual efforts (Mujahadah) as a result of which reaching unto Allah Ta'ala is acquired.

It is Allah Ta'ala's general manner of action that a person should first involve himself with strenuous spiritual exercises and thereafter attain the pleasure of "reaching unto Allah Ta'ala". However, sometimes He reverses the process by pulling the unmindful servant towards Him (by Jazb). The manner of recognizing this is that the person experiences within himself an attraction and a feeling of love towards Allah Ta'ala. This is the way of Jazb (attraction) which overtakes the person in the initial stages, through which the longing for spiritual exercises and worship is created. This was the case

with Hazrat Ibrahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe) as a result of which both, throne and kingdom became insignificant. The saints of Allah Ta'ala feel His nearness in their inner selves and through this great favor become independent of the bounties of this world. You may ask those saints what ecstatic pleasure they feel within themselves. One saintly person says:

رخ زرین من منگر کہ پائے آہنیں دارم

چہ میدانی کہ در باطن چہ شاہے ہمنشیں دارم

"O people, look not upon my pale face and think I am in trouble and in suffering.
Yes, I am weak of body, but through Allah Ta'ala's Grace, no power on earth can move my feet from the path of steadfastness".

The specially chosen friends of Allah Ta'ala, although outwardly appear in a wretched state with disheveled hair, yet their spiritual progress is far ahead of hundreds of thousands of others. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) quotes Allah Ta'ala as saying:

ہاں وہاں ایں دلق پوشان من اند

صد ہزار اندر ہزاراں یک تن اند

"O people, be aware and listen carefully, these "shawl covered" ones are my special servants.
Their sorrowful and distressed bodies are superior to thousands of other human beings."

The superiority of their "dust" is due to the blessed "contact with Allah Ta'ala". This is the reason why the dust of their bodies has become much more valuable and beloved to Allah Ta'ala than thousands of disobedient and neglectful ones. Apart from that, the body has no real value. It is like a bottle or a glass which costs merely a rupee or two. But if it is filled with high quality scent, it will be as valuable as the amount of scent it

contains. It may even be worth a hundred thousand rupees. The value of the bottle depends on the amount of scent it contains. Similarly, our body's value increases according to the amount of "contact with Allah Ta'ala". It is for this very reason that the portion of the earth where Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) is buried, is more virtuous than the "Arsh" (The Grand Throne of Allah Ta'ala) and the "Kursi". Similarly, the bodies of a disbeliever and a believer are made from earth. Both contain the same four elements. But, the difference between the two is that one is simply a collection of earth while the other contains the valuable "contact with Allah Ta'ala". One is merely an empty bottle or glass, while, the other is a glass containing fragrant scent. Thus, the value of the body of a believer is such that Allah Ta'ala has purchased it with His nearness and pleasure:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ اشْتَرٰى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَ اَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ

"Verily, Allah Ta'ala has purchased from the believers their selves and their possessions in lieu of Paradise."

(AI-Quran: Surah Taubah)

On the other hand, bodies of disbelievers will burn in the hell-fire and they will be deprived of looking upon the countenance of Allah Ta'ala forever.

كَلَّا اِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَّبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمَحْجُوْبُوْنَ

"Nay, they will be in a curtain prevented." (From looking at Allah Ta'ala on that Day)

(AI-Quran)

This announcement of being deprived from looking at Him is a sign of Allah Ta'ala's state of being a Beloved One (Shaan-e Mahboobiyat). Compare this with the rulers of this world. Since the beginning of this world till now, no ruler has ever announced a punitive sentence such as this, viz. That the evil-doer will be deprived of looking at the judge or ruler. Here Allah Ta'ala says to the unbelievers: "You are not fit that I should honor you with a glance at Me." This is said with great

emphasis" "Kallaa", Nay! Never!" Then He mentions His own Lordship (Ruboobiyat) which is the cause (illat) for "Mahboobiyat" (belovedness). This is what Allah Ta'ala has inspired me through His Grace. Hence, the body of man, which has not attained nearness to Allah Ta'ala or contact with Him, will be removed from "Ahsane Taqweem", (the best of moulds) and reduced to "Asfala Saafileen", (the lowest of the low) which in Allah Ta'ala's sight is worse than a bottle of urine. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

آں زجاجے کو ندارد نور جاں

بول قارورہ است قندیلش مخواں

"Do not call that heart a lamp, wherein Allah Ta'ala's light does not reside,
Because of worldly love and negligence, it is a urine filled bottle."

Hence, it would be wrong to call an unmindful heart a lamp and to praise it in any way. One body containing Noor is better than thousands of neglectful or unmindful ones. Allah Ta'ala's special servants are free from this worldly love but are imprisoned by His Love.

At this stage one should also understand the meaning of dunya(world)". Everything that diverts one's attention from Allah Ta'ala is "dunya". If a ruler is diverted from Allah Ta'ala by his governing, then this rule and governing is "dunya". If being poor makes one negligent of Allah Ta'ala, such poverty is also termed as "dunya". It is possible for a person to be a ruler or a governor and still remain righteous and religious and it is also possible that one can be poor and still be irreligious. From this, we deduce that the person who disregards the commandments of Allah Ta'ala, is a worldly person, even though he may be poor and destitute. On the other hand, if a king, in spite of being a ruler over a kingdom, fulfills the commands of Allah Ta'ala, he is a "Wali (friend of Allah Ta'ala)" and most definitely not a worldly person.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

چیست دنیا؟ از خدا غافل بدن

نے قماش و نقرہ و فرزند و زن

"Actually, 'dunya' means being neglectful of Allah Ta'ala's commands. It is not a name for children, wife, wealth and possessions."

The example of "dunya" is like water. A ship sails on it. As long as the water is outside and beneath the ship, it is the means whereupon the ship sails. However, when the water comes inside the ship, then it eventually sinks the ship.

Similarly, if "dunya" stays outside the heart, as in the case when Allah Ta'ala's love is greater than the love for wealth, children, wife and all else, then it is not harmful. It will be a means of attaining Allah Ta'ala's pleasure and nearness. But, when this "dunya" enters the heart and the love for these worldly entities becomes greater than love of Allah Ta'ala, then this will lead to destruction, surely, the heart has been created by Allah Ta'ala solely for Himself. In a Hadith Qudsi, Allah Ta'ala says: "The Heavens and the earth cannot contain me. But in the heart of a believer do I reside like a guest."

Hence, the heart is like a Royal Palace which is only kept for the true King of kings and not for anyone else. Therefore, if one allows a bhangi, (remover of sewerage) with clothes soiled in filth, to live in such a Royal Palace, then this will be a great injustice and deserving of punishment. Therefore, a person should leave this wretched "dunya" outside the heart and not allow it to enter. But how can one ascertain whether "dunya" has entered the heart or not? The criterion of ascertaining this is simple. If a person, at all times, is busy with preparations for the Hereafter, is trying to gain Allah's pleasure, and places every law of Shariah above his personal gains, then evidently "dunya" is outside his heart. His heart is free from the love of dunya. For him "dunya" becomes a means

of blessings and a means of attaining the true and everlasting life.

On the other hand, if, for the love of wife and children, a man casts the Laws of Shari'at behind his back and makes no distinction between haraam and halaal, is not preparing for the Hereafter, but is at all times involved with earning wealth, then surely "dunya" has entered his heart. This" dunya" will prove destructive for him. Hazrat Khawaja Majzoob Saheb (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

کسب دنیا تو کر ہوس کم رکھ

اس پہ تو دین کو مقدم رکھ

"In acquiring the world, lessen your desire.
Place Deen ahead of it. "

Outwardly, the friends of Allah Ta'ala may appear distressed. Inwardly, they experience great enjoyment therein and delight in the splendid garden of Closeness to Allah Ta'ala. Their inner freshness and splendor makes them independent of outer adornment. What decorations and adornments are needed for the walls of a rose garden?

ما اگر قلاش و گر دیوانہ ایم

مست آں ساقی و آں پیمانہ ایم

"Even though outwardly I appear poor and as an insane one,
The truth of the matter is I am not so, I am in reality drunk
With the wine of Love of the "Saqi"(Allah Ta'ala),
Everlasting."

The Love of Allah Ta'ala and His remembrance is filled with so much sweetness that all the worldly bounties are nothing in comparison to His Zikr. Moreover, whomsoever Allah Ta'ala allows to taste His Love and to experience the ecstasy of making Zikr will surely tell you that to say "**Allah**!" once is more pleasurable than all the bounties of this world.

سر کے کٹنے کا مزہ یحییٰ سے پوچھ
لطف تن چرنے کا زکریا سے پوچھ
سر کو رکھ دینے کا نیچے تیغ کے
لطف اس کا پوچھ اسمٰعیل سے

"Ask the pleasure of having the head severed from Yahya (Alaihis Salaam).
Ask the pleasure of having the body sliced from Zakariyya ((Alaihis Salaam)
And to lay down the head for slaughter, ask Ismail ((Alaihis Salaam) the pleasure thereof"

The people who only perceive the outward appearance of things are unable to experience the great ecstasy in these matters. Allah Ta'ala has jealously pulled a curtain over the special favors given to His saintly servants, so that those not sincere cannot even get a glimpse thereof. He has hidden the treasure from them. In their outwardly wretched appearance and ruined state, they hide the great bounty of "connection with Allah Ta'ala". It is a secret bond between bondsman and Master which is hidden from others. Every person who has this contact with Allah Ta'ala (Nisbat) is of a different color. The utterances of every lover is different. Everyone has a different kind of' Ah' or sigh. This is the reason that we find that one Wali (friend of Allah Ta'ala) is unaware of the spiritual status of another Wali. Both of them may be True Lovers of Allah Ta'ala but every lover has a different taste in his/her communion.

جو اور کے دل سے بھی نکلے وہ آہ ہماری آہ نہیں
جو درد ہمارے دل میں ہے اس درد کی کوئی تھاہ نہیں

"That which emanates from the heart of someone, is not our utterance.
And the pain in our heart, no one else knows"

When Hazrat Sultan Ibrahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah Alaihe) experienced the full force of his 'Nisbat' and contact with Allah Ta'ala, what was the end result? He became devoid of all lusts and became independent of all adornments. Look at the difference! At one time, he was sitting on the throne with a crown on his head. Now he was sitting on the bank of a river with torn and tattered clothes on him. Then, one day the Chief Minister of the kingdom of Balkh happened to pass that way.

"The Sultan was mending his tattered clothes when a Minister passed by
Seeing the Sultan, he looked at him with scorn, considering it an act of foolishness,
That having discarded the worldly kingdom, like a poor one he lived.

Ibrahim came to know through Kashf (inspiration), that the Minister was surprised at his poor state. Hence, the Sultan exhibited his miraculous powers of the inner kingdom, so that the Wazir (minister) may change his wrong concept of him and may come to know that through contact with Allah Ta'ala, what bounties are forthcoming. He threw his needle into the water and loudly made dua'a: "O Allah Ta'ala, give me back my needle". Immediately thousands of fish appeared on the surface of the water, each with golden needle in its mouth. The fish lifted their heads from the water and said: O Shaikh, accept these needles from Allah Ta'ala."
When the Wazir saw this miracle, he became very sorry for the wrong conception which he had formed. He became ashamed, and said, "Ah"

ماہیاں از پیر آگہ ما بعید

ما شقی از دولت وایشاں سعید

"Alas! The fish are aware of the high position of this Shaikh
While I, as a human, am unaware thereof I am unfortunate and deprived, while the fish are fortunate for this bounty. "

The Wazir was overtaken by weeping and bitterly wept for a long time. Having been in contact with the Shaikh for a short while, a complete transformation came over him and soon through the blessings of his company, his heart was filled with Love for Allah Ta'ala. This is what Allah Ta'ala does through the blessings of His special saintly servants. Misfortune changes to good fortune. In a Hadith, we are taught:

لَا يَشْقٰى جَلِيْسُهُمْ

"Those who sit in the company of the Saintly ones will never be deprived and be of ill-fortune."

Hence, we see the great progress made by the Wazir through his sorrow and weeping.

عاشقی پیدا است از زاری دل

نیست بیماری چو بیماری دل

"When the heart weeps, the essence of love is created and no illness is like this blessed illness.

Only when contact with Allah Ta'ala is established in the heart, can this heart now be worthy of being called a heart. After Sultan Ibrahim (Rahmatullah Alaihe) had exhibited his miracle to the wazir, he asked him:

ملک دل بہ یا چنیں ملک حقیر

"What is better? This kingdom of the heart or the wretched, perishable kingdom of Balkh?"

I have written this in the following words:

"Then said the king of Balkh, O Wazir,
What is better, the kingdom of the heart or the wretched kingdom of Balkh?

Of what benefit was the Sultanate of Balkh?
Now at last I experience comfort in my life.

The hustle and bustle of State proved to be a headache.
Now I am a beggar but at the same time king of land and sea.

Through the ecstasy of Zikr, I am intoxicated and elated.
I am free from all worries and troubles,

The humiliation of love has become an honor to me.
I have taken upon myself poverty and became a king. "

When the Wazir, through the blessings of the king of Balkh, had attained the inner kingdom of the heart, he immediately decided to resign from the Ministry and he chose to become a companion of the Sultan in the desert. Until then, he had been a slave of rational thinking, but he finally became successful through having become mad in the love for Allah Ta'ala.

"I tested reasoning but when nothing was successful,
I made myself into a madman and I was successful. .

And when madness proved fruitful and caused me to reach my Beloved,
I became in love with madness and cast aside reason.

O True Beloved, to utter cries in Thy remembrance appears very good.
O Allah Ta'ala, grant me the ability to continue crying to you till Qiyamat. "

Lesson

This story teaches us that Allah Ta'ala's love and the bounties of the Hereafter are so much more better and greater than the blessings of this world and all that it contains. Because of this Purer, Higher love, we are able to discard the love of this perishable world. Khawaja Majzoob (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

جگہ جی لگانے کی دنیا نہیں ہے

یہ عبرت کی جا ہے تماشا نہیں ہے

"This world is no place for attaching one's heart
It is a place of taking heed and not a place of amusement."

Hazrat Saadi Shirazi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

اے نفس اگر بدیدۂ تحقیق بنگری

درویشی اختیار کنی بر تو نگری

"O Self! If you should ponder deeply, you will conclude that it is best to adopt a life of poverty over a life of riches. "

It is true that one day, we will have to leave this world and after death the poor and the king will be equal in the grave.

ہندی و قپچاقی و رومی وجش   جملہ رنگ انداندر گور خوش

ایں شراب وایں کباب وایں شکر   خاک رنگین است جملہ اے پسر

"When the Indian, the Qaychaki, European and the African reach the grave,

They all become of one color, all turn to dust.

This drink, kebab, and sugar are all from one dust, but the dust has been colored in various forms. "

The Story of Hazrat Pir Changi (Rahmatullah Alaihe)

During the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar (Rahmatullah Alaihe), there was a man with a melodious voice who used to play the harp. His voice was so sweet and beautiful that it greatly affected men, women and children alike. Whenever he used to pass by singing on his way from the jungle, even the birds and animals used to gather to listen to him. Gradually, as he grew older and his voice through old age became less attractive, those who used to rave over his voice began ignoring him. Now, wherever he went, no one would even ask about him. Thus, his fame and popularity vanished and he began to experience the solitude of being unknown and as a result started feeling pangs of starvation and hunger.

Noticing this selfish disinterest amongst the people, one day when he was very sad, he said to himself:
"O Allah Ta'ala, when I had a beautiful voice, people used to flock around me like butterflies and they entertained me from all sides. Now I am being ignored as I have become old and my voice is no longer beautiful. These selfish people even flee from my shadow. How sorry I am that I had attached my heart to such unfaithful people! How full of deceit was not this contact with them! If only I had turned to Thee, if only I had remained busy day and night with Thy remembrance, and if only I had fixed my hopes on Thee, then I would not have seen the disappointment of this day".
Pir Changi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) heart became very sorrowful and tears started flowing from his eyes. Suddenly at that moment from the unseen, the force of Jazb pulled his heart towards Allah Ta'ala.

جو گرے ادھر زمیں پر مرے اشک کے ستارے

تو چمک اٹھا فلک پر مری بندگی کا تارہ

"When on the earth fell my tears,
In the heavens rose the star of my servitude. "

Pir Changi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) uttered one long cry, turned his back to the people and like a madman went towards the graveyard in Madina Sharif. There he took refuge in a cave of an ancient grave wherein he sat down, and weeping bitterly he prayed:
"O Allah Ta'ala, today I am Thy guest, because people have discarded me. There is no other place of refuge except with Thee. There is now no one except Thee to purchase my voice. Acquaintances have left me and old age has overtaken me. Now I have no other refuge except with Thee. O Allah Ta'ala, I turn to Thee with great hopes. Do not send me back disappointed. I (i.e. Hakeem Akhtar) have explained this in the following words in my Mathnawi:

"Pir Changi prayed earnestly
"O Allah! People were like moths around me when my voice was good.

Now there is jeering for my voice
And useless is this art of harp and instruments.

Now Thy help to me is most necessary.
My musical art has become useless."

My acquaintances all have become strangers now
My story is a lesson for all.

Even though Pir Changi is of bad character
But Thy Majesty is indeed Great.

Except for Thy door, there is no other refuge.
Leaving You, where else shall I go?

After trying all other plans of mine,
Now only to Thee do I turn my eyes."

Pir Changi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) remained in the broken grave, remaining busy with his cries to Allah Ta'ala while tears continued to stream from him until the Mercy of Allah Ta'ala came. In this way, Hazrat Umar (Radhiallaho Anho) was informed by means of ilhaam (inspiration): "O Umar! There is one servant of Mine who, because of his melodious voice, used to be very well loved and popular among people. Now, because of old age, the beauty of his voice has disappeared and everyone has discarded him. Falling from grace and popularity has become the means of his repentance and his turning towards Me. Now My Infinite Mercy has purchased his soul. Even though he may have been a sinner and negligent, I accept his cries, for in My sight, there is no other refuge for My bondsman, save in Me. O Umar! Take some wealth from the Baitul Maal(treasury), go to the graveyard and give My salaam to this troubled bondsman of Mine. Give the money to him and inform him that as of today Allah Ta'ala has made him 'near' to Himself and that He has granted him a special favor. Now there is no need for him to be sad and

grieved. O Umar! Tell this bondsman of Mine that from now onwards Allah Ta'ala will arrange his daily sustenance from the Unseen."

"To the Throne has reached your cries and weeping.
Your Buyer is your Lord Most High.

In your veins flows the blood of your liver,
In your cries lie the pains of your liver.

Your weeping in sorrow has been accepted,
Be not sad and dejected over poverty.

Through Allah Ta'ala's attraction to you, you have become special to Him,
Throw away your harp and musical instruments."

Hazrat Umar, on receiving this message through ilham (inspiration), became restless. He took some money from the Baitul Maal and proceeded towards the graveyard in Madina Sharif. When he arrived there, he saw an old man lying asleep in an ancient grave with a harp next to him, and with the sign of tears on his face and beard. He immediately realized that through those tears he must have reached this rank. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

پیرِ چنگی کے بود خاصِ خدا

حبّذا اے جذبِ پنہاں حبّذا

"How could a harp-playing old man attain such a special rank.
Blessed! O hidden attraction, Blessed!"

The author of "Gulzaare Ibrahim" expresses the same theme

"The wife of Nabi Loot was an unbeliever
While the wife of Fir'aun was a believer.

He brought forth from a temple of idols, a Siddeeq (Hazrat Abu Bakr)
And in the Kaaba was born a Zindeeq (Abu Jahl).

The son of Azar (i.e. Ibrahim (Alaihis Salaam)) was the friend of Allah Ta'ala
And Kan'aan, son of Noah, was gone astray."

The Khalifah, Hazrat Umar, respectfully remained standing in front of the grave for Pir Changi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) to wake up, so that he could give him the glad tidings of Salaam from Allah Ta'ala. While standing there, Hazrat Umar sneezed and Pir Changi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) opened his eyes. On seeing the Ameerul Mumineen, he became filled with fear, so much so that he began trembling. He feared that Sayedina Umar would punish him, because of the musical instrument that was lying next to him. During that time, it was well known that Hazrat Umar used to beat up with his stick the wrong-doers, for committing wrongs. However, when Hazrat Umar saw Pir Changi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was trembling in fear, he said to him: "Fear not, I have come to bring you glad tidings from your Lord." He said,

"Why should the stick of Farouq fall on him,
Him who cries before the Lord?

Allah Ta'ala has inspired unto me
And informed me of your name

And He has showed to me your high rank
So that I can come to you at your place

And He has told me to inform you:
'I have chosen you, O fortunate one'

And he has ordered me to take from the Treasury
Some money to hand to you. "

(From Mathnawi Akhtar)

When Hazrat Umar informed Pir Changi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) of Allah Ta'ala's special gifts and favors to him, Pir Changi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was filled with gratitude and sorrow. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:
"When Pir Changi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) heard of Allah Ta'ala's bounty and gifts from the tongue of Sayedina Umar, he began

trembling in gratitude and sorrow and began to bite his own hands in anger. Thinking of his former negligence, he cried: ***'O Allah Ta'ala, without likeness; seeing Your mercy and bounty, I am filled with shame at Your favor.'***

He cried and in anger threw the harp down, breaking it into pieces and said to it: 'You have deprived me of Allah Ta'ala's Love and have led me astray from the path of truth. For seventy years, you drank my blood and for that time have I sinned and been unmindful. Till I have now become an old man and through you my face was blackened in Allah Ta'ala's sight." Hazrat Umar observed all this and it affected him so deeply that tears came to his eyes. He said: ***"O Man, this crying and weeping of yours is a sign of your intelligence. Your life is enlightened through your nearness to Allah Ta'ala. Verily the tears of sinners are very valuable in the sight of Allah Ta'ala."***

که برابر می کند شاه مجید

اشک را در وزن با خون شهید

"Allah Ta'ala weighs the tears of sorrow and grief from the eyes of a sinner.
With the blood emanating from a martyr."

Through the blessed company of Hazrat Umar, Pir Changi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) became an eminent Shaikh of Tariqat and entered the ranks of the Auliya Allah (friends of Allah Ta'ala).

Lesson

This story teaches us that a person should never lose hope in Allah Ta'ala over his misfortunes. One should at all times have hope in Allah Ta'ala. The story also teaches us that all other connections, except connection with Allah Ta'ala, are temporary and transitory. No faithfulness remains in these conditions. Only Allah Ta'ala is at all times prepared to accept His servants. However, the love and company which is solely for Allah Ta'ala's sake, is also included in the Love for Allah Ta'ala.

The Story of a Herdsman and Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam)

During the time of Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam), there was a "majzoob" herdsman whose heart was filled with Divine Love. He, while grazing his sheep and goats in the mountainous pastures, used to cry out distressed in his Love for Allah Ta'ala, praying thus: "O Allah! Where will You meet me? If You should meet me, I will become Your servant, sew Your clothes, comb Your hair and if ever You should become sick, I would console You. O Allah! If I should see Your home, I will bring milk and butter to You by day and night. I will kiss Your hands and massage Your legs. When Your time for sleeping comes along, I will sweep clean Your sleeping place. O Allah! All my sheep are sacrificed for You. O Allah! Whatever words I speak regarding my sheep and goats, I am actually uttering them in longing love for You. The sheep are just an alibi. "

The herdsman, in the troubled state of his excessive love for Allah Ta'ala, was opening his heart as I have further mentioned in my Urdu Mathnawi (Hakeem Akhtar).

***"This is the story of a herdsman
In the time of Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam).***

***In a sincere search for his Lord,
While on the fringe of the desert plains***

***And while weeping sadly and distressed
With burning Divine Love from within.***

***One day the herdsman, while remembering his Beloved
Was crying in prayer before Him:
'O Lord of both worlds,
How can I meet You and where?***

***Show me some sign of the meeting place
Where I can meet You, O king of the Universe.***

My heart will not experience any quiet
For as long as I do not find your address.

Every Rose Garden is a thorn bush without You.
Life is a fire without You.

Without You, the beautiful voice of the nightingale,
Sounds like the cries of the crow in my ears.

This earth, sun and the moon,
This rose garden, this desert, land and sea

Are all no pleasures to me without You.
How can I live without You?

Should I meet you, O Lord,
I would press Your legs and hands every day.

I would give You bread to eat.
I would give You milk to drink every morning and evening.

I would give You milk of my goats to drink,
O Lord of all men. "

The herdsman was opening his heart to Allah Ta'ala with these words of love when suddenly Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) happened to pass by that way and as he heard the words he said:

"O Herdsman, do you think Allah Ta'ala stands in need of a servant? Does He have a head so that you can comb His hair? Does he become hungry so that you could give Him goat's milk to drink? Does He become sick so that you could sympathetically treat him? O Ignorant One! Allah Ta'ala is free of all faults and needs. Quickly repent! Your words are words of blasphemy. Allah Ta'ala is utterly not in need of any of your services."

When the herdsman heard these words of Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) he became ashamed of himself. In fear and sorrowful distress, he tore his clothes and started crying bitterly, fleeing towards the desert. Then Allah Ta'ala sent revelation to Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam):

"O Moosa, why have you chased my bondsman from Me?

I have sent you to join them to Me, not to turn them away from Me."

Mathnawi Akhtar:

Revelation came to Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) from Allah Ta'ala,
"Why did you seperate My bondsman from Me?

Such etiquettes are for the people of intellect.
Ah! Shepherd was not amoung the people of intellect.

He whose clothes are torn through Divine Love .
His clothes are not mended by truth.

Which way did My beloved flee?
Where has My mad lover gone?

Even though love has no reason and discretion,
But many a people of reasoning are its slave

And even though outwardly his words appeared uncouth,
But from inside his heart was clean.

Although outwardly he spoke words disrespectful,
But in meaning they were words of love and spirit.

The words of My mad lover O Moosa…
Court of My Greatness is searching for them. "

Lesson

The lesson from this story is that, at the time of admonishing or advising someone, one should remember that the person you are admonishing could possibly be one who is accepted in the sight of Allah Ta'ala. Thus, some persons may be truly sincere lovers of Allah Ta'ala and as such may be disrespectful and blasphemous. This maybe because of their overwhelming love and is in fact not disrespectful, although to outsiders it may appear so.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"The conversation of the lover of God towards Him
Which comes out of the heart of love, is not void of respect."

Hence, at the time of admonishing and advising, one should be moderate. It should not be done with so much harshness and in such a punishing manner that the person loses hope. However, in the case before us, Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam), because of being a courier of Shariat, it was necessary for him to show the herdsman where he had gone wrong. Allah Ta'ala's rebuke to Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) was not for the purpose of forbidding him from showing the right path. It was more to show him the correct manner of giving advice. For this reason, it would be wrong for ignorant Sufis to object against the teachings of the Ulama-e-Haq, neither should they consider themselves above the Ulama. The Ulama have a very high position in the sight of Allah Ta'ala.

The Story of Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam)

Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) was employed by a rich man. Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) had such great love for Allah Ta'ala and contact with Him, that it created within him high moral character and exemplary habits. This was a clear sign of his nobility and nearness to Allah Ta'ala. The details of which are described in Surah Luqmaan in the Quran Sharif. The nobility of Luqmaan's (Alaihis Salaam) character had a great effect on his master, to such an extent that the master considered him as a great friend and a beloved companion. Although he was the master, yet in fact the master became like a slave to his employee. "It is the miracle of love that the king became a slave of his beloved".

It then became the practice of the master that whenever he had something special to eat, he would first feed Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) of it and after Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) had filled himself, he would then eat the leftovers. Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) would consider the love of the master and his habit therefore he would eat moderately and send what was left over to the master. One day, during the melon season, the master received a melon from somewhere. At

that time Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) was not present. The master sent one of his slaves to go and call him. When Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) arrived, the master cut the melon into slices and slice by slice gave them to Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) to eat. As he ate the slices, the master inwardly became pleased at the effect his love was having upon Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam).

Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) ate the slices of melon with great pleasure and all the time expressed thanks for the favor shown to him by the master. When just one slice remained, the master said: "Let me eat this slice and see how sweet this melon is". Saying this, he put the slice into his mouth. Immediately, such bitterness spread from the tip of his tongue down to his throat, that he fell down unconscious and remained unconscious for a whole hour. When he regained consciousness, he questioned Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam), "O Beloved one, how did you manage to so heartily eat those slices of melon? Just one slice of the melon had such an effect on me, how did you manage to eat so many slices?"
Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) replied, "From your hands I have received hundreds of gifts. The burden of your kindness has bent my back. Hence, I felt ashamed that the hand that had granted me so many favors, if one day some distastefulness or bitterness should come, how can I turn away from it? O Khawaja Saheb, the pleasure of knowing that it comes from your hands has changed the bitterness of the melon to sweetness"

Lesson

My spiritual mentor, Maulana Shah Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe) (May Allah Ta'ala fill his resting place with Noor) used to relate this story with great pleasure and used to repeat the last couplet. While relating this story he used to advise thus: "At every given moment there are numerous bounties and favors of Allah Ta'ala upon men. But, if for a moment some difficulty comes our way, we lose patience and fail to be grateful. On the other hand, there are those to whom

through the blessings and the company of the friends of Allah Ta'ala, Allah Ta'ala has granted a good understanding of religion, so that when sorrows and difficulties touch them, they remain happy and pleased with their Lord. At such times, they draw strength from their good understanding of Deen and realize that this world is like a hospital and we are all like patients in it. There are times when the doctor gives the patient medicine like "halwa-e-badaam" (sweet medicine) to eat and at other times feeds them" charaita" and" Ghuloo-e-neb" which are very bitter. However, in both of these there are beneficial results for the patient. Similarly, Allah Ta'ala is "AI-Hakeem", the All-Wise and at the same time He is "Al-Haakim" Ruler. He is also "AI-Raheem", The Merciful One. Hence, whatever conditions befall us in accordance with Allah Ta'ala's will, whether they bring comfort or discomfort, all are beneficial and in our interest.

The Hadith informs us that Allah Ta'ala has set a high rank for some people. But, they are unable to attain that rank through their good deeds. Consequently, Allah Ta'ala sends some calamity, which if they accept and bear patiently, will enable them to reach that high position. Another Hadith says, "A believer is touched by fever and (while he suffers in this fever) his sins shed off like leaves from the trees in autumn." Another Hadith says, "A thorn pricks a believer and he receives reward for it." Yet another Hadith says, "On the Day of Judgment when a person will be rewarded for his patience in the face of calamities and misfortunes, every person who suffered calamities will wish that his skin had been cut to pieces with a scissor, then what a grand reward he would have received.

Hence, a Mumin (believer) should remain pleased even in times of misfortunes. In other words, there should be no complaints or objections from his tongue. He should at all times seek Allah Ta'ala's pardon and forgiveness for sins and pray for safety from calamities: "O Allah Ta'ala, we are weak and do not possess the patience to bear the difficulty of calamities. Please, in Your Infinite Mercy, change the calamity to the safety

of Your pardon". We have been prohibited from praying for calamities and have been commanded to pray for safety and well-being. If we pray for calamities and misfortunes, it would be a sign from us of our bravery, while praying for safety and pardon is an admission of weakness, which is liked by Allah Ta'ala.

"O people, discard your show of strength and power.
Adopt an attitude of crying and weeping before Allah Ta'ala,
As Allah Ta'ala's mercy is directed towards crying in humbleness.
Cry to Allah Ta'ala in humility so that you become cheerful and happy.
So that without the smile on your lips
You remain so happy within your heart (with Allah Ta'ala)
That thousands of smiles may be sacrificed for such cheerfulness of the heart. "

If at all times there is safety and comfort then a person's temperament which inclines towards worship of Allah Ta'ala, will move away from steadfastness. Without calamities and misfortunes, a feeling of humility and weakness is not created in a person. Allah Ta'ala says in a Hadith Qudsi.

اَنَا عِنْدَ الْمُنْكَسِرَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ

"I am with those whose hearts are broken."

"Sabr" (Patience) causes the hearts to be broken as it is bitter.
A person suffering from sorrow or in desperate need calls upon Allah Ta'ala in humility crying and weeping. Can a person making, dua'a to Allah Ta'ala while in ease and comfort ever be equal to him? The former person is in such a calamity which causes him to become nearer to Allah Ta'ala and develops a strong bond with Allah Ta'ala.

بڑھ گیا ان سے تعلق اور بھی
دشمنئ خلق رحمت ہو گئی

"The contact with Him increased even further
The enmity of the creation became the cause of mercy"

A saintly man said: "The way towards Allah Ta'ala is traversed speedily." This is because sorrows and misfortunes inculcate feelings of weakness, humility and affliction in the heart. At such times, Allah Ta'ala's special communion is experienced." Allah Ta'ala says: "Verily Allah Ta'ala is with those who patiently persevere." This theme has been very well expressed by Hazrat Asghar Khaundwy (Rahmatullah Alaihe):

"If You are sharing this grief of mine,
Then why should I grieve over it."

In conclusion, the life of this world consists, but of a few days. Whether these days are of ease and comfort or whether the days are of calamities and misfortunes, they all shall shortly pass. Hence, neither should one be overjoyed in times of ease and comfort, nor complain and object in times of difficulties and calamities. At times of ease and comfort, express gratitude. While in times of difficulties and calamities, patience, acceptance and surrender are befitting. If a person keeps the aims and objectives of life in focus, then he has found the solution to all his problems. The main aim of this life is to attain the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, which is only attained by following His path and obeying His laws, to repent for all shortcomings and sins and to seek forgiveness for faults. Thus, if a person follows the Sunnah, then whether conditions of ease or conditions of calamity prevails, both of these conditions hold within them the means and way towards Allah Ta'ala's pleasure. On the other hand, if one is not a follower of the Sunnah, then conditions of ease are not beneficial.

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) has said, "Calamities and difficulties come to sinners as well as the righteous. The calamity may be a punishment for evil deeds or a means of gaining nearness to Allah Ta'ala and an elevation of the rank of a person. Now, how can one ascertain whether it is a blessing or a punishment? Is the person righteous or a sinner? The person who follows the Sunnah even

in difficulty, feels love for Allah Ta'ala, finds pleasure in His decisions, gains closeness to Him and more humility, is a righteous person. On the other hand, calamities which create darkness, solitude and distance from Allah Ta'ala and through which a person is disinclined towards repentance and humility before Him, but rather, rejects and complains of Allah Ta'ala then, surely this misfortune is a punishment for evil deeds. In Surah Noor, the blessings of seeking forgiveness (Istighfaar) are enumerated, through it, Allah Ta'ala sends rain, grants beautiful gardens and grants blessings in one's children.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says: "When you experience sorrow in the heart, turn towards Istighfaar. Sorrow comes through Allah Ta'ala's command, So neglect not good deeds, but in fact increase therein.

When Allah Ta'ala wishes to shower His mercy on us,
He creates in us the ability to incline towards weeping in humility. "

Maulana Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says that for some time he had a problem, understanding why Allah Ta'ala grants some devotees certain high ranks through their spiritual efforts and exercises (mujahadah). While to others, He grants the same favor without making them undergo any strenuous spiritual effort. So, how is it possible that His Mercy should tolerate a true lover of His undergoing such strenuous ordeals?

Maulana Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) struggled for quite some time to find a solution, eventually one day the solution dawned upon him. If, without Mujahada (effort), all the stages and ranks were accessible to the devotees (Saalik) then no one would appreciate the bounties of Allah Ta'ala. Hence, if there was no appreciation for these bounties, then there would be no continuation and progress in such bounties. Just as there is an increase of bounties through gratitude described in the Holy Quran, likewise there is a loss of bounties in case of ungratefulness. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) questions:

"Why should the King of all intellect,
Who is all Merciful, command such strenuous Mujahadah?"

In the next verse he answers:

"Without Mujahadah no light of the truth is created in the heart
Which is perceived through true faith and Divine communion.
If that perception was possible through reason alone, then there was no need for putting the self thru such trials."

The amount of crying in humility and repentance, a person does in times of sorrow and pressing need, is much more than is possible in times of ease and comfort. In spite of that, a person should not wish for, nor look forward to calamities, but rather should seek happiness and prosperity. But if, Allah Ta'ala's sends some sorrow or calamity, one should not, then, become distressed or impatient. Instead, one should understand that Allah Ta'ala's intention is to make and formulate you and through this formulation to increase and raise you in rank. Sorrows and calamities are also bounties (ne'mat) from Allah Ta'ala because at such times of need, dua'as come straight from the heart, the place of prostration becomes wet with tears and one experiences the pleasure of supplication; which is in itself a great bounty.

"In praying to Allah Ta'ala the Lovers have no other objective
Than to have the pleasure of whispering secretly in communion with Him."

This secret talk is attained at the time of sorrow and weeping and these sighs of crying and lamentation in His presence is well loved by Him. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"I cry and weep before my Beloved, for that appears well pleasing to Him
And in both worlds our crying and sorrowful sighs are loved by Him.

Blessed is that eye that cries in the remembrance of the Beloved
And blessed is that heart that is embroiled in His love.

For as long as the baby does not cry, milk does not flow from the mother's breast.

And as long as the clouds do not shed raindrops, gardens do not become green.
By the' crying' of clouds, gardens become green and fertile
And as much as the candle 'cries', so much it increases in light.

Where the tears flow, mercy prevails
And where water flows, greenery and fertility prevail.

Allah Ta'ala equates the tears of the sinner in grief
To the blood flowing from a martyr.

Crying and weeping is a great wealth
And the Mercy of Allah Ta'ala is a great blessing.

The wealth of this world consists of gold and silver.
The capital in Allah Ta'ala's sight is Love and two crying eyes."

One Saintly person has said:

"O Beloved, for the eyes to stay awake for anyone save You, is a waste,
And to cry over anyone's parting save Yours, is useless!"

Although it is bitter to bear calamities and misfortunes with patience, it is a wonderful medicine that brightens the devotee. The high ranks which were unattainable through years of spiritual exercises and rigors, are speedily attained through patient perseverance. For this reason, it is essential that every devotee (saalik) consider the bitterness of patience as being a sweet treat in view of the great bounty attainable by it. It entails, only a few days of difficulty and hardship followed by smiles and laughter all the way. One gives only half a life in effort but in exchange for this half, the Great Giver of bounty grants numerous lives.

"He grants so many bounties through suffering patiently
Such bounties which have not entered your mind,
Such is the blessing of patience.

Thousands of medicines has Allah Ta'ala created
But one such as patience,

Adam and his children have not seen.

Whoever has adopted patience
Has in fact acquired the high rank of Siddeeq (the highest rank of friendship).

The Prophet (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) has said that Allah Ta'ala does not even grant Imaan to the one in whose temperament there is no patience. Hazrat Ayoub (Alaihis Salaam) for seven years remained patient and pleased with Allah Ta'ala's guests (the worms on his body). It is related that when Hazrat Ayoub (Alaihis Salaam) was healed, someone asked him: "Hazrat, when were you happier? Was it at the time when you were suffering in this misfortune or at the time when you were healed? " He replied: "Thanks to Allah Ta'ala that he granted me the bounty of good health. But, during the time of sickness, every morning and evening, the special voice which reached me from the Unseen, asked me: "O Ayoub! How are you?" What pleasure and ecstasy was in that voice! It is such that numerous lives may be sacrificed for it. That asking after my well-being was such that it made me forget all the misfortunes which I suffered. The heart now longs for that voice which has now stopped".

When a person suffers sorrow and misfortune, he should most definitely not complain or utter any objections. This is most disrespectful. There is no objection in taking treatment or complaining of pain in the body. The lover of Allah Ta'ala should not, however, object to or have aversions of Allah Ta'ala who sent the calamity. Because sorrow and comfort are handed out by Allah Ta'ala, hence complaints and objections are disrespectful and Kufr. It is essential that a slave and a bondsman should at all times be satisfied with what the Master decides, as the Master is in full control and can do as He pleases.

Now I close this subject by quoting a few lines of poetry. May Allah Ta'ala make us His true servants and grant us the ability to act in accordance with his pleasure.

"When in Love, the complaint of the beloved is inappropriate.
For me there is no injustice in any of His actions.

Outwardly, though it may be a calamity,
But it is in fact a blessing in disguise.

That calamity in which there is goodness for us,
Is not really a punishment.

The love of the slaves of Allah Ta'ala cannot reach perfection
Until the blood of evil desires is shed.

May that which is pleasing to You also become pleasing to me.
*What would I do with that pleasure, which is not accompanied by Your pleasur*e

How can I say that the pain which is in my heart (of Your love)
Is not a gift of Yours.
He who is not blessed with this gift remains Oblivious of You

Do not rejoice over my tears of longing for Him,
O you uninitiated in love, you have not yet experienced the pain of deep-hearted love.

Whosoever you witness giving his heart and soul to gold and silver.
O Akhtar, believe that he has not tasted the sweetness of the love of Allah Ta'ala. "

The Story of the Saint in the Mountain

A dervish once went up a mountain pass and there made a promise to Allah Ta'ala, "I am turning my back on all worldly connections. Now I shall remain here in solitude busy worshipping You. When I feel hungry, I shall wait for sustenance from You. I will not ask anything from anyone. I will not pick any fruit of the trees of this mountain. Except, if by the wind, any fruit falls from the trees, that I shall eat."

For some time he kept his promise. However, because in his vow he had not said 'Insha-Allah Ta'ala' - if Allah Ta'ala so

pleases. His vow was full of pride, arrogance, and over-confidence in his own courage and ability. Consequently, a punishing test overtook him and he lost the ability to bear the pangs of hunger. Allah Ta'ala ordered the wind not to blow in that part of the mountain for five days, so no fruit fell from the trees. Consequently, the dervish suffered unbearable hunger. He grew weak with hunger and lost patience and was forced to break his promise. He picked the fruit from the trees to satisfy his hunger and broke the command of Allah Ta'ala,

"Fulfill your promise."

So it happened that a group of thieves came to hide along the foot of the mountain. The Chief Police Officer of the town was informed. While searching for the real thieves, he saw the dervish and thought that he was one of them. Hence, he immediately arrested him. The dervish protested greatly and proclaimed that he was not a thief, but the police officer did not listen. The punishment was that they cut off his right hand and his left foot. At that time, a traveler passed by and upon witnessing what had happened, he scolded the police officer and the soldiers:

"You dogs, what have you done to this holy and saintly Dervish? He is a real saintly man and the Abdaal (one of a high category of friends of Allah Ta'ala) of our era. He had isolated himself away from the world to settle in the solitude of the mountain." When the Police Officer heard this, he began trembling in fear. In fear and with great grief and sorrow, he came to the dervish with his bare head and feet, crying bitterly over the mistake that he had made, saying:

"I swear, I did not know that you were a saintly man. I made a mistake and considered you as one of the thieves. For Allah Ta'ala's sake, forgive me, otherwise I will become a victim of Allah Ta'ala's anger and will be destroyed. "

The dervish replied, "Brother, it is not your fault. I am the guilty one. I broke my promise with my Lord and for that I have been punished. I know the cause and my inner self is aware of the sin for which this misfortune has befallen me."

The sincere ones are at all times in danger, In Allah Ta'ala's path, there are great tests awaiting them.
Such promises and vows should not be made which one cannot fulfill.
And sit not in places of danger where you are bound to be tested with trials."

Lesson

Firstly, a person should never take an oath for anything which is against the Shariah e.g. "I will not eat" or "I will not drink water" etc. The oath of the dervish was of this type. Secondly, a person should never depend upon his own courage and strength alone. In all matters, one should depend upon Allah Ta'ala and seek His help. If one intends doing anything, then one should always say: 'Insha Allah Ta'ala'. If for some reason, one forgets to say, then the moment he remembers it he should say 'Insha-Allah Ta'ala'. One must remember at all times that without Allah Ta'ala's power nothing can take place.

"Allah Ta'ala's one atom of favor is much better
Than a thousand efforts from the obedient ones.

Humility in the path of Allah Ta'ala and indigence
Is better than pride in our devotions and obedience."

One should, with steadfastness on the Deen, pray to Allah Ta'ala at all times, "O My Lord, do not leave me to my Nafs for even one moment. Rectify my condition in such a manner that at all times it is in accordance with Your pleasure, till You make my ending upon Imaan. Ameen.

The Story of Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho)

Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) was an Abyssinian slave belonging to a Jew named Umayya Bin Khalaf. He embraced Islam in the early days of Islam, when the enemies of Islam did not allow the Muslims any rest. They made every effort day and night to extinguish the Light of Allah Ta'ala but Allah Ta'ala declared that He would complete

that Light (Noor), even though the non-believers were averse to it. If Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) had wanted to, he could have kept his conversion to Islam a secret and thus have saved himself from persecution and injury. However, the love for Allah Ta'ala within him forced him to openly proclaim the Kalima-e-Tawheed and to utter the cry of "Ahad!Ahad!" (One! One!).

"When the Lover saw the dagger of Love in the hands of the Beloved,
Without fear and oblivious of danger he ran towards it.

And when the Lover saw the dagger aimed at him,
He felt it compulsory to offer his head to the knife.

O truly Beloved, in Your remembrance Love seems good to me
And till Qiyamat I want to continue uttering this cry in madness.

When the self has claimed to be a wild duck,
Then when the storm of calamities descended what complaint could it have?"

This means that the wild duck is not afraid of the storm, but is able to overcome the ebb and flow of the waves of the storm. Similarly, the self of the Lover continues on its way along the route without being adversely affected by the storm of prevailing conditions.

Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) uttered the cry of "Ahad! Ahad!" This angered the Jew and forced him to react with violence. He assaulted Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) in such a manner, that his body was filled with blood and injury. He made him lie down on the hot desert sand, saying to him: "Now do not dare utter the cry of God's oneness!" Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) replied within himself: "For the sake of Your Love the disbeliever wants to kill me and is shouting at me. O Beloved, Come hither to the lowest heaven and see the show of Your Lover. What a show it is!"

One day, Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radhiallaho Anho) was passing that way and saw the blood soaked Bilal (Radhiallaho

Anho) '"crying out: "Ahad! Ahad!" On hearing his cry, Hazrat Abu Bakr stood still and perceived the love for the Divine Being and the ecstasy involved. Seeing Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) being persecuted to such an extent, his heart agitated and tears came to his eyes. He called Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) towards himself and advised him to utter Allah Ta'ala's name in solitude and not to utter it in the presence of his persecutor. Otherwise, his persecutor would continue to unjustly persecute and punish him. Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) '"replied: "O Honored One, you are the Siddeeq of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) I will accept your advice and will act accordingly."

The following day, Hazrat Abu Bakr again happened to pass that way. Again, he witnessed the same scene. Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) was again uttering the cry of "Ahad! Ahad!" while the Jew was terribly assaulting him until again his body became bloody. Seeing this, Hazrat Abu Bakr 'was again filled with agitation and he advised Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) "Brother, why do you utter 'Ahad' in the presence of this persecutor? Utter it silently and secretly within yourself". Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) replied: "I make Taubah and in future will not act contrary to your advice."

"O Foolish one, do not command the nightingale towards silence
For whenever it remembers the garden, its crys will come on the lips. "

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says: "When Abu Bakr advised him towards silence and secrecy, Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) repented again, But when love overwhelmed him, he swallowed the repentance.

It is the message of a restless heart.
Without You there can be neither peace nor comfort."

Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) in spite of numerous persecutions and pains could not keep his love for Allah Ta'ala a secret and continued openly uttering the cry of "Ahad! Ahad!"

"When Love pulls on the strings of the heart,
Many are the souls that are sold for a meager price.

The body of Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) was injured and blood-stained before the Jew, but his soul was enjoying nearness to Allah Ta'ala in Divine Love, enjoying unending Spring. This is what is called True Love. What a sad state of affairs that today people look at sensual love and call it love. That is not love. The love that is illicited by metaphorical beauty is not really 'ishq', but rather it is fisq' (transgression), which is caused by overeating. If a person has to go without food for a few days, he will forget his love and ask for bread. But the Divine Love, because it is placed within the essence of man, even if no worldly needs are met, no change will come in the Lover and his Love will not diminish. Love is actually the name for complete surrender before Allah Ta'ala; the truly Beloved is the Doer of everything and a servant is one who is pleased and satisfied with all that He does.

It is a fact that Allah Ta'ala loves His servants distressed conditions and their weeping and crying in sorrow to Him. At times, in spite of His numerous mercies and gifts, He sometimes delays in accepting their dua'as, so that sighing and crying before Him does not end after their needs are met. And so that they can continue to call onto Him: "Ya Allah Ta'ala!' Ya Allah!" Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"Sometimes Allah Ta'ala delays in answering the prayers so that one may continue earnestly calling unto Him and crying in humility.
While it is done, He is aware thereof and He greatly approves thereof"

Hence, this delay in answering his prayers is for the bondsman a means towards His Mercy and not a sign of His rejection or of His considering the dua'a as being worthless. For a person to be able to speak secretly to Allah Ta'ala, in communion with Him, is indeed a great honor and a favor for the believers. The person who has found the love of Allah Ta'ala, will never want to attain freedom from it. Now someone

may object that it appears that true lovers of Allah Ta'ala are all the time facing calamities and distress, instead of experiencing Allah Ta'ala's Mercy. Actually, that is how it appears from afar, the outward feature give us a bloody appearance.

"From afar love seems bloody
So that insincere lovers do not tread this path.

This bloody appearance is a guard
Against insincere and half-baked lovers, not to come this way."

On the other hand, when one is endowed with true love, one proclaims:

"O Beloved, let it not be the good fortune of your enemy, to be destroyed by your sword,
May the heads of friends remain safe, for you to try your sword on them. "

Imagine a lover who was pining for his beloved from whom he had been separated for ten years. He has turned pale, gone weak and sick. Now, suddenly, his beloved arrives and embraces him, pressing him so hard that his ribs feel like breaking and his eyes appear to be popping out of their sockets. Noticing his discomfort, the beloved says, "If you disapprove of this act of mine, I will discard contact with you and become intimate with someone else". Now, what answer will that lover give? If he is really a lover, he will answer thus:

"May my breath of life go out of me and fall at your feet.
That is the desire of my heart and only longing".

Someone else, looking from afar and from the outside, will get the impression that this lover is in great distress. But, on questioning the lover, the joy and pleasure of love becomes manifest. He will look upon these moments as pleasurable moments and will wish they were prolonged. When that is the effect of sensual worldly love, then one can only imagine how much greater the ecstasy will be when one has love for the True Beloved, i.e. Allah Ta'ala.

From the above example, it should be understood that those people who have fallen prey to Divine Love, may appear to be in great distress and calamities, but inwardly they enjoy nearness to Allah Ta'ala and His Communion; which indeed provides them with great pleasure. Outwardly, they may be dressed in tattered clothes, suffering hunger, starvation and be pale in the face, but inwardly they experience great peace and comfort. If kings come to know of the utter joy they experience, love of possessing throne and crown would be forgotten. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) quotes Allah Ta'ala as saying:

"This distressed one, covered in a quilt is My special bondsman,
Among thousands one such is born."

The main objective of this life for all creatures is to attain the love of Allah Ta'ala. This is the essential aim of life. So Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) underwent and endured numerous difficulties and hardships because in his sight the reward for bearing them was great.

"For the sake of thy love, my Beloved,
I am in love with suffering, pain, and sorrow."

Hazrat Abu Bakr on numerous occasions, advised Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) but on every occasion when he passed that way, he saw the same picture - the Jew persecuting Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) who was all the time uttering: "Ahad! Ahad!" Hazrat Abu Bakr then went to Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) and related the story to him. When Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) heard the story, he was filled with sorrow and tears flowed from his eyes. He asked, "O Siddeeq! What is the solution to this problem? How can we save Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) from this calamity?" Hazrat Abu Bakr replied, "O Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam), I shall buy Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho). Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) said: "All right! Let my share also be therein". Allaho Akbar! What a good fortune for Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) that Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe

Wasallam) himself took part in purchasing him. In that black body of Hazrat Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) was an enlightened heart, which was filled with Allah Ta'ala's love.

Hazrat Abu Bakr approached the Jew at a time when he was again busy beating Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho). Hazrat Abu Bakr asked, "Why are you beating this friend of Allah Ta'ala?" The Jew replied, "If you have so much sympathy for him, then bring the money and take him away as yours". Hazrat Abu Bakr immediately responded: "Take my white-skinned Jewish slave with the black heart and give me this black skinned slave with the enlightened heart from Abyssinia". Hazrat Abu Bakr took Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) and went to Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam). He asked: "O Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam), what kind of transaction did I make? I gave away a white bodied, black hearted one and brought back a black body with an enlightened heart". Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) replied: "You have made a very good deal, O Siddeeq". Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) embraced Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) and held him to his heart.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"Mustapha (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) embraced Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) and held him against his chest. The ecstasy Bilal (Radhiallaho Anho) felt! Who can ever imagine that?"

The Story of Sultan Mahmood and Ayaaz

One day Sultan Mahmood called together the officials of his government with the aim of testing their intelligence. He took out a pearl from his treasury and first of all handed it to the Chief Minister and questioned him: "What is the value of this pearl? How much can it be sold for?" The Wazir replied, "Sir, this pearl is of great value. It is more valuable than two hundred donkeys laden with gold". The king then ordered: "I command you to crush this pearl." The Wazir replied: "I will not destroy this valuable pearl. I have the welfare of your treasury at heart and to crush this valuable gem

would amount to disrespect on my part". The king applauded this reply and rewarded him with a royal robe of honor.

The king then took the pearl from the Wazir and handed it to another of his court officials and asked him to determine what the value of the pearl was. He replied, "Sir, this precious pearl is more valuable than half of your kingdom. May God protect this pearl." The king commanded him similarly; to crush the pearl. He replied, "Sir, my hands cannot move to destroy this valuable pearl. To destroy this pearl would amount to enmity towards your treasury". The king praised him profusely for his reply and rewarded him as well. In this manner, one by one the king called sixty-five officials from his government and each one of them followed the example set by the Chief Minister. The king praised each one of them and rewarded them with a royal robe of honor.

After testing all the other officials, the king now turned to Ayaaz, handed him the pearl and said: "O Ayaaz, everyone of my officials have seen this pearl. You also have a look at its radiant light and then tell me, what is its value?" Ayaaz replied, "Sir, whatever value I am going to mention, this pearl will be worth much more than that". The king ordered, "Quickly, crush this valuable gem into pieces". Ayaaz knew the king's temperament and immediately realized that the king was putting him to a test. He broke the valuable pearl into small pieces and did not pay any attention towards receiving any royal robe as a reward.

As soon as he broke the pearl into pieces, all the officials created a great commotion. The Minister of the State uttered, "By Allah! This man is a disbeliever, an ungrateful one, showing no regard for a valuable gem belonging to you." Ayaaz replied, "Respected brothers! Which is more valuable, the command of the king or this pearl? O people, in your sight the pearl is more valuable than the king's command. I could not dismiss and, like a Mushrik, turn towards the pearl. To remove my sight from the king and turn towards the pearl is equivalent to shirk in the love and obedience towards the king." Ayaaz said: "Respected Sirs, is the command of the king more valuable

or the pearl? I shall not move my sight from the king and I will not turn my sight to the pearl like a Mushrik. O You unworthy ones! The actual pearl was the king's command. All of you broke the pearl of the king's command." When Ayaaz explained this secret to all the Ministers who were jealous of Ayaaz's nearness to the king became humiliated and disgraced by his understanding.

Lesson

In this story, we learn that the "command comes before respect". It means that when the king gave a command, the correct line of action was to obey that command. Ayaaz had personal love for Sultan Mahmood whereas the Ministers and courtiers had love for their own positions, ranks and wealth. The understanding and rational reasoning which Ayaaz displayed was an outflow of his love for Sultan Mahmood. Love itself teaches one the etiquettes of love. This true understanding and knowledge is not derived through the intellect, it is created out of love. Note that Shaytaan himself was a rational being and not a being filled with love. For this reason, he objected to the command of Allah Ta'ala, the Ruler of all rulers, whereas it would have been only proper that when an order came from Allah Ta'ala, it should have been immediately implemented. The result of his action was that he was banished from the Court of Allah Ta'ala. On the other hand, Nabi Adam (Alaihis Salaam) and Hawa (Alaihas Salaam) were lovers of Allah Ta'ala. When they committed a mistake, they did not feel any disgrace in admitting their fault to Allah Ta'ala. Along with admitting their fault before their Beloved, they busied themselves with gaining His pleasure, by shedding tears as they prayed for His pardon.

In this story, there is a further lesson of the magnitude of the Divine Command which should be carried out without any hesitation. The relationship between Sultan Mahmood and Ayaaz was the relationship between Master and slave. Our relationship with Allah Ta'ala is even greater and deeper. Every atom of our bodies was created by Him, reared by Him and is

owned by Him. He has such absolute ownership over us; wherein no one else shares.

Muslims are commanded to perform Jihad. In Jihad, we remember that the "Kuffaar" (disbelievers) are also Allah Ta'ala's creation and Allah Ta'ala's numerous bounties are employed in rearing them just as they are provided for the believers. "O Allah Ta'ala, You are so Kind that from Your unseen treasury, You provide sustenance even for the non-believers." But, when the command is given to perform Jihad, it would be inappropriate to think why should we shed the blood of so many people for whose fostering and nourishment the heavens, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds, the East, the services of thousands of machines, thousands of factory workers and laborers and thousands of animals were utilized.. Now in Jihad, those very same people for whom so much provisions have been made, are being destroyed within minutes and seconds. Now, in Jihad there will be no time for hesitation because now the Order of Allah Ta'ala has come and in the face of Allah Ta'ala's command, the whole world has no value whatsoever. When the command from Allah Ta'ala comes, the demand is that the necks of the Kuffaar (disbeliever) should be struck down for they are enemies of Allah Ta'ala fighting against the Believers.

"Without Shariat's command, it is a crime even to drink water and when the fatwa of Jihad is sounded, it becomes obligatory to shed blood."

In this story, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) tells us a general rule through which a person can save himself from disobedience and from going astray. All those desires which are contrary to the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, no matter how valuable, pleasurable and beautiful they may appear, the True Lover of Allah Ta'ala and the daring one, should never act in accordance to them. In fact, he should readily crush the pearl of his desires with the stone of Allah Ta'ala's command. Neither should they cast an evil glance at any handsome beardless boy,

nor at any strange woman; even though there may be danger of them losing his life (first accidental gaze is forgiven).

The Story of Hazrat Zun Noon Misry (Rahmatullah Alaihe)

How blessed was the time when Allah Ta'ala granted Hazrat Zun Noon Misry (Rahmatullah Alaihe) the pain and sorrow of His Love!

"How blessed that time when the heart is given to love. No Istikhara is required for such a deed of righteousness."

A great agitation was created in his heart and he began weeping and lamenting. A little sorrow encountered through Allah Ta'ala's love is better than all the other bounties of both the worlds. It is such a sorrow which sets one free from all other sorrows. It is also such a sickness which gives one safety from all other illnesses.

ہوں آزاد فوراً غمِ دو جہاں سے

ترا ذرۂ غم اگر ہاتھ آئے

"Free from the sorrows of both worlds will you be quickly,
If an atom of sorrow from Allah Ta'ala's love is attained."
(Akhtar)

The heart, which till now had only been aware of transitory worldly pleasures and which only reached up to this transitory world, now through the blessings of True Divine Love has flown up to the heavens and up to the Throne of Allah Ta'ala. The true devotee of Allah Ta'ala, by the blessed special perceptive communion with Allah Ta'ala, experiences within himself a great feeling of contact with the Hereafter and consequently has only a nominal contact with this worldly existence. His major perception is the contact with the Hereafter. My beloved Shaikh Hazrat Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe) used to explain his condition to his Shaikh Maulana

Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) thus: "Hazrat, I feel that I am not walking upon this earth, but rather upon the plains of the Hereafter. Being busy with worldly things does not prevent me from keeping the Hereafter before me."

In reality, this is what actually happens when the heart develops a strong bond with Allah Ta'ala. Sometimes it also happens that for the special devotees of Allah Ta'ala, special favors are sent from the unseen. The moments of these special favors are such that words cannot describe them. Only the soul of the person, on whom those special favors descend, can know and enjoy the pleasures thereof. Through Divine Love, a strange condition came over Hazrat Zun Noon Misry (Rahmatullah Alaihe). Hazrat Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says that he was overtaken by such a feeling of madness and confusion that his sighs and utterances caused people to become greatly affected. It seemed that Divine Love brought nothing but crying and sorrow and as if there was nothing good in it.

"Through crying and lamenting, the way towards Allah Ta'ala is easily traversed
And so nearness is attained which is not reached through years of striving through spiritual exercises."

The overwhelming nature of his love was such that from the sighs and cries that he uttered people became helpless. Hence, a group of irreligious people had him imprisoned. When they took him to jail, he went willingly and happily. Some of his closest friends accompanied him in sympathy. When they locked the door behind him, the friends began to wonder: "What has happened? Such a great Shaikh has been imprisoned." It seemed as if the Shaikh himself was hiding the inner condition under a cloud of madness. It may be that in order to avoid the vileness of people, he preferred to go to jai1. Possibly, it may be that he had become fed up with the company of rational beings and presented himself as a mad one. Hence, all those friends who visited him in the jail, said to him: "Respected Sir, we all are your sincere friends and

companions. We have come here to inquire about your health and condition. We are surprised and astounded as to who could have laid a charge of insanity against you. We look upon you as the very embodiment of sanity. These people who only look at the external appearances are completely unacquainted with your high position and rank of nearness to Allah Ta'ala. They regard you as being insane, while we know that you are a True Lover of Allah. We are your sincere friends and lovers. We look upon you as our beloved one in both the worlds. Please inform us the reason why you prefer to waste your time in this prison. Please do not keep the secret from us. "

Shaikh Zun Noon (Rahmatullah Alaihe) listened to their words and was not convinced by their sincerity. Hence, to test their sincerity he picked up some stones and ran towards them, like a mad man. They all fled, fearing being hurt by the stones. Seeing this, the Shaikh laughed at their claim of love and sincere friendship and exclaimed: "Have a look at these friends of the dervish; O You ignorant ones. What do you know of love and true friendship? "

"When does a friend keep himself aloof from the sorrows of a friend?

The friendship of a friend is like a skin around him
And he will bear all sorrows from his friend.

A friend is like gold and calamities and misfortunes are like fire.
Pure gold shines even brighter when the heat of fire touches it. "

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:'

"O You, when with one wound you retired from your love,
Choosing the way of those who flee.
It is clear you have not yet been touched by love,
And have only heard of it."

In other words, the path of true love is not an easy one to tread. You will have to shed blood from your heart and your liver. Only then the path will open up to you. Hence, one should tread the path of Allah Ta'ala in a manly manner. A

saintly man - Baba Saheb, who was also a Khalifah of Maulana Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), said, "Accept and then resolve. In other words - first, make a strong contact of love with Allah Ta’ala and then resolve to bear all the trials that will come your way while on that path". For the sake of worldly business and employment, a person will bear all kinds of calamities. But this is a matter of the Hereafter, for which a person should be prepared to bear even greater burdens.

The Story about a Cure for Sensual Love

A devotee resided in the company of a saintly man for the sake of improving and rectifying his spiritual life. He diligently applied himself to the Zikr and deeds which the Shaikh prescribed for him. However, there was one maidservant of the Shaikh who brought food to them from the Shaikh' house. By, daily glancing at her as she brought the food, his heart became filled with love for her. Thus, whenever she brought the food, he cast lustful glances at her, instead of looking at the food.

The maidservant who was also a devotee seeking Allah Ta’ala, soon realized that he was casting lustful glances at her. Her enlightened heart perceived the lustful glances and thus she complained to the Shaikh: "Sire, a certain Mureed of yours is involved with lustful love. What benefit will there be for him from your prescribed Zikr and spiritual exercises? You should first cure him of this figurative love."

It is the practice of the saintly ones, as far as possible, that they do not expose or humiliate their companions or those connected with them, so that these people do not lose heart. As the Shaikh is devoted to Allah Ta’ala, his sights are directed at Allah Ta’ala's grace and bounties:

"When the ocean of Mercy (of Allah Ta’ala) comes pouring forth,
The fire worshipper of a hundred years can become the pride of all Saints.

Do not despise any disbeliever.
Who knows when Allah Ta'ala's Mercy may take him?

It is possible that before death overtakes,
The Kaafir and the Mushrik, in a blink of an eye, can become Bayazid (one saintly one)

Hence, the Shaikh, in spite of knowing the secret, did not scold the Mureed and refrained from exposing him. However, within he thought of a way to cure him of this lustful love. Allah Ta'ala inspired him with a plan and he acted upon it. He gave the maidservant some laxative, which caused her acute diarrhea. At the same time, he instructed her to collect the feces in a bucket.

Due to the purgative, she defecated about twenty times until she became very weak and thin. Her face became exceedingly pale and her eyes and cheeks became hollow. Her face appeared frightful like one suffering from cholera. She appeared very unattractive and all her beauty vanished. The Shaikh then told her: "Take his food to him today and then quietly stand there." When the Mureed saw the maidservant, instead of looking at her, he now turned his eyes away and told her: "Put the food down". As he uttered these words, the Shaikh entered in the room and said: "O you fool, why is it that today you turn your eyes away from this girl? What is missing from her today that your love for her has vanished?" Then, the Shaikh instructed the girl to bring the container in which all the feces had been collected. When she placed it before him, the Shaikh said to the Mureed: "O foolish one, apart from these feces, nothing else has left her. From this, it seems that in actual fact you were in love with these feces and now that it has gone out of her body, your love has also gone."

Mathnawi-e-Akhtar:

"What has become deficient in the body of this maidservant?
That you turn away in disappointment.

What has departed from her body
That now you are averse?

The Shaikh then showed the container
Which was filled with the girl's feces

Look at it, O Seeker!
It is only this which had left her body.

Thus your beloved, in fact was this feces.
It is over this thing that you became a mad man.

Now that through the purgative she has become weak and pale, the love that you once felt has now vanished." The Shaikh asked the Mureed, "Tell me, if you really loved this girl then how is it that this love has now turned to dislike and aversion?" Through this plan of his Shaikh, the Mureed realized that he had become involved in sensual love. He became ashamed of it and in sorrow and lamentations, he repented to Allah Ta'ala. Through this repentance and sorrow, he was eventually endowed with true Divine Love.
Hazrat Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) drew this advice from the story:

"O people, today you fall in love with a well-musk-scented one with curly locks.
One day that same lock of hair will appear worse to you than the tail of an old donkey. "

"Those very eyes that cause you to become intoxicated and for which you are prepared to sacrifice your life,
In old age will have dirty water dripping from them.

Look at a beautiful child who through his beauty becomes Master among men
But look when old age overtakes him, he becomes worthless.

Look how lovely and fresh the sun appears at the time of rising,
But remember its death at the time of setting.

See how splendid the moon appears on the fourteenth night,
But check how is its sorrowful state as it begins to wane.

O Man, you are in love with good food and fine outward form,
But see the result thereof in the toilet afterwards.

The people of this world, like the world itself, are truly unfaithful.
When they turn their face towards you, then know it is not the face,
It is merely the back of the head.

Now that you have come to know the unfaithfulness of the world and worldly people,
Then establish company with the saints of Allah Ta'ala and with no other beings except them."

A sign of being accepted by Allah Ta'ala is that, through the company of these pious servants, one's heart inclines towards Allah Ta'ala and disinclines towards worldly things. Outwardly, these pious servants must be followers of the Sunnah and at the same time, should have spent time in the company of the one who himself adheres to Sunnah completely. After this, one should never seek miracles from them because miracles and Kashf (inspirations) are involuntary occurrences. Such involuntary occurrences have nothing to do with being accepted or rejected by Allah Ta'ala. Miracles are not a sign of being chosen by Allah Ta'ala nor has Allah Ta'ala placed the criterion for acceptance on involuntary matters. Regarding the despicable and transitory nature of illusionary beauty, I have written a poem entitled "*Word of warning regarding sensual love*" and for the benefit of readers, I quote it here. May Allah Ta'ala accept it and make it beneficial for all.

A Word of Warning Regarding Sensual Love

By Hazrat Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb
(Damat Barakaatuhum)

وہ زلف فتنہ گر جو فتنہ ساماں تھی جوانی میں

دم خر بن گئی پیری سے وہ اس دار فانی میں

جو غمزہ شہرۂ آفاق تھا کل خونفشانی میں
وہی عاجز ہے پیری میں خود اپنی پاسبانی میں

سنبھل کر رکھ قدم اے دل بہار حسن فانی میں
ہزاروں کشتیوں کا خون ہے بحر جوانی میں

ہماری موت روحانی ہے عشق حسن فانی میں
حیات جاوداں مضمر ہے دل کی نگہبانی میں

جو عارض آہ رشک صد گلستاں تھا جوانی میں
وہ پیری سے ہے ننگ صد خزاں اس باغ فانی میں

جو ابرو اور مژگاں قتل گاہ عاشقاں تھے کل
وہ پیری سے ہیں اب مژگان خر کیچڑ روانی میں

وہ جان حسن جو تھا حکمراں کل بادشاہوں پر
ہے پیری سے بغاوت آج اس کی حکمرانی میں

محبت بندۂ بے دام تھی جس روئے تاباں کی
زوال حسن سے نادم ہے اپنی جانفشانی میں

وہ ناز حسن جو تھا زینت شعر و سخن کل تک
وہ اب پیری سے ہے محصور کیوں ریشہ دوانی میں

کہاں کا پردۂ محمل کہاں کی آہ مہجوری
وہ بت پیری سے رسوا ہے غبار شتر بانی میں

شباب حسن کی رعنائیاں صبح گلستاں ہے
مگر انجام گلشن دیکھ شام باغبانی میں

وہ جان نغمۂ عشاق اور جان غزل گوئی
ہے پیری سے گل افسردہ بہار شعر خوانی میں

ہزاروں حسن کے پیکر لحد میں دفن ہوتے ہیں
مگر عشاق ناداں مبتلا ہیں خوش گمانی میں

اگر ہے عشق تو بس عشق حیّ لایزل باقی
محبت عارضی ہوتی ہے عشق حسن فانی میں

نہ کھا دھوکا کسی رنگینیٔ عالم سے اے اختر
محبت خالق عالم سے رکھ اس دار فانی میں

That troublesome curling lock which caused sedition in youth, Has transformed into the tail of a donkey in this perishable abode, in old age.

That coquetry glance, which was notorious in shedding the blood (of lovers),
In old age has become too helpless to have any care for itself

O heart! Step carefully, in the spring of perishing beauty, Thousands of boats of youth have sunk in the sea of love.

Falling in love with perishable beauty is our spiritual death,
Only in safeguarding one's heart, lies the secret of eternal life.

Ah! That cheek which was the envy of a hundred gardens in youth,
Now, due to old age, it has become a disgrace to a hundred autumns in this perishing garden.

Those eyebrows and eyelashes that had become an altar for the lovers yesterday,
Now due to old age, they are like the eyelashes of a donkey, with flowing matter discharging from them.

That sweetheart beauty who yesterday ruled the kings,
Today, due to old age, there is rebellion in her kingdom.

That glowing countenance which was being adorned by a volunteer love,
Because of its declined beauty, is ashamed of its admiration.

That pride of charm which, until yesterday, was the adornment of Poetry and Literature,
Why is it, that now, in old age it is subjected to criticism?

Now where is the veil of 'howdah' (of camel) and that deep sigh of separation?
That idolized doll is being humiliated in the dust of camel driving.

The charms of a young beauty is the dawn of a rose garden,
But look at the end of this rose garden in the eve of gardening.

That essence of the sweet love of lovers, and that inspiration for the love-song composition,
In old age has been reduced to a withering rose in the poet's eyes.

Thousands of Beauties are buried in tombs
Yet the fools (lovers) are still given to vain imagination.

If there is any true love, then it is the eternal love of the Ever-Living Lord,
The love of a perishing beauty is always a temporary one.

O Akhtar do not be deceived by any charms of this Universe, Rather remain in love with (Allah Ta'ala) the Creator of the Universe in this temporary world.

Lesson

The seeker of Allah Ta'ala (the Mureed) became involved in sensual love and would not have found a way out of it. However, a saintly person's company saved him. As Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says, "The path towards Allah Ta'ala is not reached through reason alone. One will have to seek the company of pious personalities with whom one should reside with the intention of self-rectification and reformation. If one is going to avoid being obedient to those saintly beings, then one will at all times remain imperfect and will never be able to achieve complete results. Thus, in this way Abu Ali Sina, who was the Master of the Philosophies, at the time of his death admitted that 'reason' was of no benefit! He stated, "We have ridden the horses of 'Intellect' and 'Reason' in vain. And having been deceived by 'Reason' and 'intellect', we avoided the obedience and guidance of the saints of Allah Ta'ala, and thus, continuously swim about in an imaginary world."

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says: "It is completely useless to swim in the sea of Reason and Intellect. There is need for the ship of Nabi Nooh (Alaihis Salaam) - i.e. the help of the friends of Allah Ta'ala. Look how Nabi Nooh's (Alaihis Salaam) son - Kan'aan depended on Reason alone saying, "The high mountains shall save me from this storm". He considered the ark of Nabi Nooh (Alaihis Salaam) as being despicable. Consequently, the ship was saved during the deluge and reached the high mountain, while, Kan'aan drowned.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says: "When you do not have the proper sight, then you look upon the love and company of the saintly ones and their obedience (i.e. their ship) as despicable, while considering imitation of the people of Europe as the high mountains of Intellect and Reason. But,

beware, do not look upon this ship as being of no value and a thing to be despised. It is true that the AhIullah, the saints are usually dressed in old and tattered clothes and live simple lives, but do not look at the simplicity of their lives and consider them lowly and despicable. Instead, look at the Grace of Allah Ta'ala that is with them. Look at the splendor of the one who arrives through the ship and do not look at the heights of the mountains of Reason.

The power of Allah Ta'ala is such that with one wave, He can turn the ship upside down. But, that ship which travels in the shadow of Allah Ta'ala's Mercy, in spite of its outward weakness and the evil intention of the enemy (Shaytaan), will pass through all the trials in safety. If one is not going to follow this advice, then in the end, one will have to admit the shortcomings of the intellect.

Hence, if a person needs to find safety from faults and sins, he will have to become closely connected in love with the saints of Allah Ta'ala. Then he will not suffer losses. People who wish to travel on the path of Deen with only reason are breakers of their 'Taubah'. When Shaytaan gives one blow in their direction, their 'Taubah' is broken down. Yet their arrogance is such that they look down upon the saints of Allah Ta'ala. Such people remain imperfect throughout their lives.

So, O People! Seek for yourself a way towards Allah Ta'ala and consider the company of the saints as medicine.

The Story of Hazrat Shah Abul-Hasan Kharqani (Rahmatullah Alaihe)

Once, a true dervish (seeker of truth) undertook a long journey from Taliqaan to Khaarqaan in order to pay a visit to Hazrat Shah Abul-Hasan Kharqani (Rahmatullah Alaihe). Along this journey, he had to cross many mountains and valleys. He bore great difficulties like thirst, but he endured all that patiently for the sake of his love. He had such restlessness and longing for divine love that it forced him to take up this journey. Such is the way of love. What happens

in the case of Divine Love? It has a different effect upon different people.

***"What word did you utter in the ear of the flower
That it now laughs in pleasure.
And what did you mention to the nightingale
That now through the pains of love it weeps and laments?"***

My Shaikh Maulana Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe) used to tell me a story about a great Majzoob Sufi who used to live somewhere in the rural district. The condition of 'Qabz' (spiritual retraction) descended on him from Allah Ta'ala. In the technical terms, 'Qabz' is such a condition in which the Sufi feels spiritual inactivity, non-progress, depression and a lessening in the presence of Allah Ta'ala. His heart feels no joy in worship and it seems as if there is no pleasure derived from Zikr. This condition is sent over to a devotee with the sole purpose of spiritual training towards the acquisition of his spiritual progress. If the devotee should at all times enjoy the feeling of Allah Ta'ala's nearness, then there is the possibility of pride and arrogance being created within him, which are spiritually destructive. Allah Ta'ala dislikes all sins from His servants but the most despised characteristic is that of pride and arrogance.

Hence, the experience of 'Qabz' brings the devotee towards humility which in Allah Ta'ala's sight is a very well-liked characteristic. Man is a bondsman (slave) of Allah Ta'ala, an 'abd'. In the word 'abd', the meaning of humility and distressed state are included. Hence, for someone to be an 'abd' (slave) of Allah Ta'ala and at the same time to be proud and arrogant are two contradicting qualities and the cause of great loss.

***"Allah Ta'ala has created you from dust, hence a bondsman,
Adopt an attitude of meekness and humility like dust."***

Sometimes, the feeling of 'Qabz' comes about as a result of sins, which create darkness in the heart. As a result, no pleasure is felt in the performance of worship. Nonetheless, whatever the cause of 'Qabz', seeking forgiveness in abundance proves to be

very beneficial. My Shaikh, Hazrat Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe) said: "No matter how strong the feelings of 'Qabz' one may feel, no matter how deep the feeling of darkness in the heart and the spiritual inactivity one may feel and no matter if this condition lasts for years, in order to combat it, one must daily make wudhu and then perform two rak'aats nafal salaah with the intention of 'Taubah'. Thereafter, proceed into prostration and in utter humility, grief- cry before Allah Ta'ala- make 'istigfaar' and thereafter recite the following Wazeefa 360 times:

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ اِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِيْنَ

"O The Ever-Living, O The Self- Subsisting One, there is no God save Thee. Verily, I have been of the unjust ones."

In this Wazeefa, the two Holy Names of Allah Ta'ala are mentioned i.e. يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ and it has been mentioned in the Hadith as being the Ismul-A'zam - 'The Great Name of Allah Ta'ala'. This is followed by that verse of the Quran, which Nabi Yunus (Alaihis Salaam) recited and through its recitation, he was saved, from three layers of darkness. The first layer of darkness was the darkness of night. The second was the darkness within the water and the third was within the belly of the fish. To explain Nabi Yunus's (Alaihis Salaam) condition in the three darknesses, the Quran says: وَهُوَ كَظِيْمٌ ***'He was depressed'***. 'Kazm' is an Arabic term that is given to that feeling of distress in which a person remains quiet. Through the blessings of this verse, Allah Ta'ala saved Nabi Yunus (Alaihis Salaam) from sorrows. Thereafter, Allah Ta'ala announced

وَكَذٰلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

... and so We save the believers'.

This shows that from that day until the Day of Judgment, this verse is revealed as a treatment for the removal of sorrows and

affliction. Any believer, when in trouble and encountering calamities, habitually and profusely should recite this verse, he will surely be saved. This verse mentions Allah Ta'ala's Glory and also an admission of one's weakness and unworthiness. Further, there is also a measure of the expression of grief and regret which is tantamount to Taubah (repentance). In fact, it is the most important ingredient of repentance. After reciting this verse, one must recite Durood Sharif three times.

The story being told was about a saintly man living in the rural areas who was suffering from a very heavy form of 'Qabz'. It so happened that the nearness he felt towards Allah Ta'ala became clouded just like clouds covering the sun. He wandered from place to place crying in sorrow over the loss of Allah Ta'ala's communion. He enumerated the loss of his condition:

"My Beloved, just like cooked dhall without rice, is tasteless,
So also are the days of my life in Thy absence.
Through sorrow, the days of my life seem foreign to me
And my nights and days are a suffering in separation from Thee.
O My Beloved, through Thy parting my days are bitter And from my soul comfort has been fled."

When my Shaikh used to relate this story, tears would flow from his eyes and a strange condition would descend upon him. It is true that the pleasure of love can only be heard from the one who experiences such love and knows the pains involved therein. "How can one without pain of love know the ecstasy of such pain?"

In any case, we were talking about a dervish undertaking a long and arduous journey to meet his Murshid, Shah Abul-Hasan Kharqani (Rahmatullah Alaihe). After this long and arduous journey, he finally reached Khaarqaan. After making enquiries, he finally reached the house of his Shaikh. He knocked on the door. At the time, Hazrat Shah Saheb (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was not at home. He had gone to the forest to collect wood. From inside the house, Shah Saheb's wife

enquired: "Who is there?" He replied: "I am a traveler, who has travelled a long journey with the sole purpose of visiting Shah Saheb". The wife was a woman of a bad and bitter temperament. When she heard about the traveler's love and confidence in the Shaikh, she became very angry and said: "Didn't you have anything better to do than to undertake such a long journey with so much difficulty for something so useless?" She then continued to criticize Hazrat Shah Saheb (Rahmatullah Alaihe) in such insulting words that it would be inappropriate even to mention them. When the Mureed heard these words from the Shaikh's wife, he could not restrain himself and said: "If you were not married to Hazrat Shaikh (Rahmatullah Alaihe), then I would tear your body to pieces. But you are the wife of that Great Devoted Arif (recognizer) of Allah Ta'ala. Therefore, I will refrain from any rudeness. "

The traveler then departed from the house and enquired from the people about the Shaikh. He was informed that the Shaikh had gone to the forest to collect wood. In the love of the Shaikh, he went in that direction. On the way, he thought to himself: "Such a great and famous Shaikh and he has such a bad-tempered wife. I do not know how such a bad-tempered wife can be blessed with the company of such a man". While those thoughts were passing through his mind, he saw someone coming on the back of a lion with a bundle of wood. It was none other than the saint of that time, Hazrat Shah Abul-Hasan Kharqani (Rahmatullah Alaihe). When the Shaikh saw the Mureed he burst out laughing. He realized that the words of his wife had sadden and depressed him. He said:

"If my patience did not bear the bitterness of a bad-tempered woman,
Then why would this lion now carry me around?

I bear the many heavy burdens and difficulties caused by this foolish woman
And these are all borne for Allah Ta'ala's sake as mujahadah,

Because I am beloved and accepted amongst men

And the honor of men causes pride to be created in me.
Thus my pride and arrogance is treated for me by this woman
Through her insulting ways and ill-tempered manner."

Allah Ta'ala is the Lord of this world. From Him alone comes both the outward and inner nurturing of men. Thus, for the inner (spiritual) nurturing of any devotee, He produces the means towards the unseen ways of nurturing. He handles every devotee according to his capacity of tolerating sorrows. No matter how purified a person's self may be, there always exists the danger of a relapse towards evil.

"The nature of the self is like Fir'aun.
Be not satisfied with it
Whenever you become unmindful of it,
It remembers its previous Kufr (sins)."

My Shaikh, Maulana Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe) once told me a story about a certain saintly man. His maidservant, having seen him for quite some time eating chicken and dressed in splendid clothes, began wondering: "What kind of Holy man is this who at all times lives a life of comfort and never experiences any difficulties?"

The maidservant informed the Shaikh about her doubts, "Sir, I have heard that the friends of Allah Ta'ala are made to bear great difficulties and calamities while on His path. Thereafter, they are blessed with the great bounty of His friendship. But I see you at all times eating chicken and dressed in splendid clothes". The Saint on hearing these words uttered one sigh and replied, "Remove the clothes from my back". When she lifted the clothes from his back, she saw a huge running sore on his back which was continuously discharging pus. This sore was a constant source of great pain and trouble for the Shaikh. Seeing this, the servant became quite ashamed and asked for pardon for her misconception.

Thus, we see that there are times when the saintly ones will joke and laugh. They will sometimes wear splendid clothes, eat splendid food, accept the invitations from friends

and people will press and kiss their hands and feet but ask their hearts what passes through them:

ہنسی بھی ہے میرے لب پہ ہر دم اور آنکھ بھی میری تر نہیں ہے

مگر جو دل رو رہا ہے پیہم کسی کو اس کی خبر نہیں ہے

"On my lips there is always a smile and my eyes too are not wet with tears,
But, the continuous tears of my heart, no one knows."

Lesson

From this story, we learn that if involuntarily some calamity or misfortune befalls us we should not be worried because in exchange for that misfortune and sorrow, Allah Ta'ala grants much greater bounty. Sometimes, a small calamity saves from a major calamity. Just as in this story, we see how the ill temper of the wife proved to be a savior for Hazrat Shah Saheb (Rahmatullah Alaihe) from pride and arrogance. However, one should not seek misfortunes or wish for calamities but should at all times pray for well-being: "O Allah Ta'ala, we are weak and do not possess the strength to bear misfortunes. I beg You for general well being."

When we pray we should always pray for Aafiyah (well-being) but should also remember that whatever conditions Allah Ta'ala sends over us we should be satisfied therewith and should also at all times pray that Allah Ta'ala keep calamities far away from us.

The Story of Hazrat Jalaluddin Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe)

Hazrat Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was a great man of his era and Allah Ta'ala gave him a considerable amount of Divine Knowledge. He was born at a place called Balkh in the year 604 A.H. He belonged to

the offspring of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddeeq (Radhiallaho Anho) and was a grandson of Sultan Muhammad Khwarizm Shah (Rahmatullah Alaihe). At the age of six years, his father took him to the famous saint, Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Attar (Rahmatullah Alaihe). The saint presented him with a copy of his Mathnawi "Asraar Nama" as a gift and informed his father: "This son of yours will one day cause a tremendous upheaval."

Years later, Maulana went to Syria to complete his education. He also stayed in Damascus for seven years. There he became acquainted with all the schools of thought, Ilmul-Kalaam, jurisprudence and acquired specialized knowledge regarding the differences of opinion among the various schools of thought. When his days of acquiring knowledge were completed, he occupied himself with teaching and lecturing. However, Maulana had been created for the purpose of teaching Divine Love and Divine Knowledge and thus the fire of Divine Love had been placed within his heart.

"The teaching of the Divine Lover is to remember Him
With crying and lamentation
And not in increased reading of chapters and sections.

Just as Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifah (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and Hazrat Imam Shafi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) had been created for fiqh (jurisprudence), likewise, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) has been created for teaching the path of Love. For the Divine Lovers the beauty of the Beloved is the best teacher. When a true connection with Allah Ta'ala is formed in the heart, then without study or teacher the knowledge of Prophethood will rage inside.

Allah Ta'ala made His own arrangements from the Unseen to prepare Maulana to undertake the task of teaching Allah Ta'ala's love. In the heart of Shamsuddin Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), there was an ocean of Divine Love and he was searching for a way to spread the light of that jewel from his heart and earnestly prayed: "O Allah! You have placed a treasure of Divine Love in my heart. Grant me such a special servant of Yours into whose heart I may transfer this treasure,

so that he may, with his tongue of Love, expound my secrets in the light of the Quran and Hadith". This prayer was immediately answered. Shamsuddin Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) received a reply, "Go to Rum where you will meet Jalaluddin Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe). We have chosen him for this task."

From the Unseen, arrangements were made for Maulana Rumi.
When Shams Tabrezi besought Allah Ta'ala's help,

"***O Allah, the fire that burns in my chest,***
The agitation that rises in this being.

O Allah, let me find such a person
Who will be fit to bear this burden.

For indeed is near the hour of parting,
To whom shall I entrust this trust, O Beloved?"

Then from the unseen came the reply:
"O Shams Tabrezi, proceed speedily to Rum

And make (Maulana) Rumi the Master of Rum
And free him from the duties that bind him."

As soon as he heard this "voice", Hazrat Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) proceeded to Rum. He went to Qunya (Turkey) where he settled among the sellers of brass goods. Near the door of an inn, was a platform on which the elders of the sellers used to sit. It was at this spot that Hazrat Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) first met each other and from there onwards their friendship grew. While in the company of Hazrat Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), the condition of Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) underwent a complete change. As Divine Love began to take its full effect upon him, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) became drunk with the love of Allah. He stopped his teaching, lecturing, preaching and refused to be removed from the company of Hazrat Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) for even a short while. This change caused a tremendous commotion in the town.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) writes:

"O Beloved One! In Your love, I love to utter the slogans of love
Till the Day of Judgment, this madness will I continue to love dearly.

At that time, Maulana Rumi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) condition could only be described by the following poem:

دل مضطرب کا یہ پیغام ہے   تیرے بن سکوں ہے نہ آرام ہے
تڑپنے سے ہم کو فقط کام ہے   یہی بس محبت کا انعام ہے

"This is the message of a restless heart
Without You there is no peace and comfort.
We are filled with restlessness
And this is the prize of love."

When the effects of Divine Love became visible on Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), a rumor was spread about in the town that Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) has used sorcery on Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe). For fear of further spreading of this rumor, Hazrat Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) secretly left the town and went to Damascus. This separation caused Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) a tremendous amount of sorrow. Seeing the condition in which he was, some people went to call Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) back. Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) returned but after staying for a short period, he again disappeared somewhere. Some historians have mentioned that someone killed him and thus made him into a martyr. This separation from his spiritual guide, made Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) very restless. His life became very bitter.

"O Beloved, through your separation, my life has become bitter,
And from my life all comfort has been removed.

O Beloved, through the sorrow of parting from you,

Cries of separation are coming forth and reaching the skies.

O Morning breeze, take his message who is far away
And deliver it to my Beloved Shaikh.

O Beloved, your grace which has been with me all along,
When I remember, my soul, like a mad man
Searches for your fragrance in this world."

The effect that the blessed company of Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) had on Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) can be gauged from the words of the Mathnawi. The 28000 couplets contained in the Mathnawi are from the tongue of Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) but actually those poetic lines are in fact the fire that emanated from the chest of Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), which needed a tongue to be expressed. Thus, Allah Ta'ala has made Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) the tongue of Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe).

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was a grandchild of a king and an eminent scholar of Hadith and Commentary. When he proceeded anywhere, numerous students out of love for him used to follow him on foot. Now that same Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was carrying the belongings of his spiritual guide, his bedding, his cups and his grain on his head and following his Shaikh wherever he went.

"Such a big Shaikh has become like a donkey walking around,
Such is love when it comes. So you false lovers, beware."

Look at what the company of a true Shaikh did to Maulana! The Love for his Shaikh had made Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) like a mad one. No more did he have the sedan, the special robes, turban, and the love of students gathering around him. Instead of the signs of knowledge being visible, he was now overcome by the signs of poverty. In fact, now he had been made aware of the true reality of knowledge.

"In truth, true knowledge is the name of Allah Ta'ala's Love.
Otherwise, if one disregards the true object of acquiring knowledge,

Then such knowledge becomes a means for Iblees to mislead.

That knowledge which does not lead towards Allah Ta'ala,
Is in fact not knowledge, but ignorance.

Arrogance of knowledge keeps one deprived of truth, dear friends.
The aim and object of knowledge is but to acquire Divine Love,
Apart from that all else is deception and deceit."

But the true idea of knowledge only comes out after having been in the company of a true spiritual guide. That happens when the turban of Fazeelat (virtues) becomes lost in the turban of love. Then the true object is attained. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

قال را بگزار مرد حال شو

پیش مرد کامل پامال شو

"Leave aside all lectures and leave 'Qeela' (it was said) and 'Qaala' (he said).
Become a Sahib-e-haal (person of action). Create love for Allah Ta'ala Inside

However, this bounty can only be attained once you have chosen the company of a Divine Lover. The spiritual glances which Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) gave to Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), made such an impact on him and bestowed him with such a favor, that normally this is only attained after a lifetime of strenuous spiritual exercises. For this reason, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) had such great a love for each and everyone of his utterances and anything connected with his Shaikh, so much so that he even had a great love for the town of Tabrez. In the Mathnawi, whenever the town of Tabrez is mentioned, there are several couplets in praise of the town itself.

Hazrat Hajee Imdadullah Muhaajir Makki (Rahmatullah Alaihe) used to say: "The description of the attributes that Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) has given in the

Mathnawi regarding the 'Awliyaa-Allah (friends of Allah Ta'ala) is taken from his own personal experiences. This is because he had attained 'nisbat' (contact with Allah) without any strenuous spiritual efforts and exercises. For this reason, he used to praise the 'Auliyaa - Allah very highly.
He said:

"The existence of a spiritual guide is like a ladder leading towards Allah Ta'ala.
And how can an arrow fly in speed to its destination without a bow?"

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) spent many hours in solitude in the service of his 'peer' (spiritual guide) and thus attained the fire of Divine Love into his chest, for which Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) used to pray to Allah Ta'ala in such earnestness. "O Allah Ta'ala, grant me such a person who will be able to bear the fire of love from me". Through the blessings of the company of the true Shaikh, true Imaan began to be felt and through the blessings of Divine Love, waves from the ocean of knowledge entered into his heart. So wide was this ocean of knowledge that even up till today, the Auliyaa are benefiting by it. Even today, the Mathnawi is busy igniting the flame of Divine Love. We can ascertain both Maulana's knowledge and his 'inner knowledge' by studying the Mathnawi. At this point, I wish to quote an example by which we deduced how high was his rank of love.
Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"When upon Mt. Tur's outer peak, the light of Allah Ta'ala was exposed,
It fell down into pieces so that the light not merely touched the outside but also assimilated inside.

When in the hands of a starving one a piece of bread is placed,
Then it causes saliva to flow in the mouth and the eyes to tear.
Such became Tur, that the light also reached its insides."

The description of how Mt. Tur was broken into small pieces, which Maulana described in the light of Divine Love, also gives an indication of Maulana's own love-like

relationship. How much did Maulana Rumi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) contact with Allah Ta'ala undergo a complete transformation through Hazrat Shams Tabrezi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) fire of love? This can only be gauged from the following couplet:

"The pace of holy man in his spiritual progress is such that each month's journey is the equal of one day,
But the True Lovers of Allah Ta'ala are such that at every breath their souls fly to the Grand Throne (of Allah Ta'ala).

O Father, discard sleep for one night and enter into the gully of sleeplessness.
Then come and see how True Love has made these sleepless ones mad

And see how like butterflies they are slain in the splendor of nearness to God.

O Man who dirtied yourself through passionate desires,
Come hither as my character has become such that it is Divine Akhlaq.

In the hearts of saints there are numerous secret melodies of True Love
From which true seekers are granted precious life.

O You who for the sake of worldly gain go before worldly ones in humility
And in the presence of the Saintly act in arrogant manner,
Whereas in fact these ones are worthy of royal treatment.

I am a royal falcon and through the blessings of Divine Love
Have been endowed with virtuous ways.

Through the blessings of True Love
My attributes have been changed from that of a vulture towards the praiseworthy.

When my bad manners through the blessings of my Murshid disappeared
And myself became endowed with good manners,

Now I hear through the Noor of Allah Ta'ala and see through His Noor.
And I see His Noor on my right, on my left, above me and below me.
And find the Noor of Truth around my neck and head like a collar."

Through the blessings of Hazrat Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) reached such a high position of Divine Love and in his soul, experienced such feelings of love, as expressed by the following verses:

"Wine became intoxicating due to us,
Not that we became intoxicated through wine.

This body is existing because of the soul,
The soul is not in need of the body for its existence."

When the soul has a special contact with Allah Ta'ala, then the attributes of the soul overwhelm the attributes of the 'Nafs'(inner-self). As the soul is connected with the real world (Hereafter), so in comparison to the Hereafter, this world is like a prison for it. Thus, when the true devotee of Allah Ta'ala experiences true love within his soul, he then feels the need for the everlasting intoxication of the Hereafter to that of the temporary and passing intoxication of this world.

When the enjoyment of spiritual ecstasy overwhelmed Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), he realized insignificance of theological arguments. Faith through spiritual experience replaced faith through logical arguments and taqleed. These seemed to have no significance whatsoever. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"Proofs and arguments of proof have legs of wood, which are weak, But Divine Knowledge through taqwa, righteous deeds and true love are beneficial indeed."

Imaan which comes through the insight of the heart is even greater than the insights gained through the senses. The conviction produced in the company of the saints and the

profuse performance of the Zikr gives one a mountain of strength. The whole world may become contaminated with 'Kufr (disbelief) and Shirk' (ascribing partners with Allah Ta'ala), but the person will at all times hold onto the tenets of Tauheed (Oneness of Allah Ta'ala). As Hazrat Saadi Shirazi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"Even though a heap of gold is placed at the feet of a true believer and even though a naked sword be placed on his neck,
Neither will greed for anything sway him from Tauheed
Nor will fear of the sword induce him to stray."

It must be noted that the true believer in Tauheed does not live in the hope of reaping any worldly benefits, nor is there any fear in him. This is the essence of Tauheed. However, these days there is a new policy afoot, which has made "change according to the times", the criterion for success. This is another one of those items imported from the West and advocates that we should change according to the demands of our time, irrespective of whether during the course our Imaan is destroyed or not. This policy and the search for truth are two contradictory things. The Seeker of truth has only one aim in front of him and that is to acquire the pleasure and satisfaction of Allah Ta'ala alone, while the followers of this new policy will have to bend in order to satisfy the people of the times. This means the people following this new policy will always be thinking and considering ways to please others whereas a believer is completely unconcerned of the time, seeking only the pleasure of the Great Creator.

Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) openly invites all people to find within themselves the great wealth of everlasting contact with Allah Ta'ala. He invites them towards the great bounty which he himself had tasted and enjoyed and which he now wants everyone else to enjoy and reap the benefit. He says that the saintly ones keep many secrets hidden from others because the average man is unable to comprehend them properly. However, sometimes it happens that, in an involuntary manner, something is mentioned as in the case of

the mouth uttering something at the time of sneezing or yawning when it involuntarily opens up. At such times, some such secrets are uttered which Allah Ta'ala wants to spread. He creates such conditions to overcome them that they are unable to control it and thus makes them utter such words. This is done so that interested people may get an inkling of their world thus turning their hearts away from this transitory world and redirect them towards the Unseen.

"O People, if for one moment you experience the splendor of His Nearness,
You will in great earnestness submit yourself to great Mujahadah (struggle).

And if you should within yourself see the splendor of His nearness,
You will find this world and all its pleasures tasteless and bitter."

Now listen to the advice which Maulana gives, which, if acted upon, will fill the soul with love of the Divine Being and disenchant the heart from this world.

"Within yourself create the path towards Allah Ta'ala.
How is that achieved?

Cast away the perception of others besides Allah Ta'ala
And when all have left the heart, Allah Ta'ala's splendor will enter.

O Man, treat your illness with the alchemy medicine that was placed within your body.
So that good morals be created from bad

And so that your enemies, Nafs and Shaytaan, turn to friends.
And when through the spiritual guide your bad morals turn to good, you will become beautiful, and He will bring you near to Him
And save you from the loneliness in contrast to worldly lovers.
From whom He will turn away. "

Through the blessed company of Hazrat Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) experienced such a frenzy of love and madness and speedily traversed the various stages of spiritual progress via Jazb that he became convinced that the only path towards Allah Ta'ala was the path of Love and madness for Him. He says:

"Any other path apart from the path of frenzied love and madness
Are all, paths leading far away from Him.

The cry and the slogans of love appears good to me.
O Beloved, so I desire to remain till the Day of Judgment- a mad man.

If apart from the chains of Shariat, two hundred chains should be tied around my feet,
I would break them all as no chains can hold him who is a mad Divine Lover of God."

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was an ocean of Divine Love and for a lover nothing except the remembrance of his Beloved is pleasing. Then there are times when he used to long for another Divine lover with whom he could converse about the True Beloved and through this bring comfort and peace to his troubled heart.

After the demise of Hazrat Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) was now in search of such a companion. One day, in this troubled state of the mind, he was passing by the shop of Salahuddin Zarkoob who was busy beating metal leaves into thin foil. While the hammer was beating the metal, it made such a noise that devotees felt a feeling of love in their hearts. Maulana at that time was a man filled with Divine Love and on hearing the sounds of the hammer, fell down unconscious. Salahuddin did not stop beating the metal leaves and in this manner wasted many of them. Finally in the heart of Salahuddin, as a result of the grace of Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), the fire of Divine Love was lit. He left his shop and followed Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe).

"O heart consumed with love! What did you breathe into my heart?
That there is an ocean of fire burning in my heart?

I was not aware of the ways of love
But let a similar heart be pressed against my chest.

Perhaps its name is love and madness,
The flame that has been lit inside. "

For a period of nine years, Salahuddin remained in the company and service of Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and his company brought great comfort to Maulana. Salahuddin passed away in 664 A.H. After his demise, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) chose from amongst his Mureeds Husamuddin Chalpi to be his special companion for as long as he remained alive. Thus, he consoled himself in his great longing for the True Beloved. It was through the encouragement provided by Maulana Husamuddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe) that Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) wrote his famous work, The Mathnawi. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) referred to this in the Mathnawi:

"Just as a thirsty one throws walnuts into deep water repeatedly (which he cannot reach)
In order to hear its sound and to see its bubbles.
O Husamuddin, my object is you in this Mathnawi.

This Mathnawi from its beginning is for you
And upon you is its ending, O Husamuddin.

My object in this Mathnawi is to explain your words as words denote the glory of the writer. For in truth, the writer is you. I am merely the means for your voice and meanings.

Once Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), while reciting the Mathnawi, suddenly remained silent and said: "At this time from the unseen no words are coming. For this reason, there is no form. That is why I prefer to remain silent". Then he said: "It is a fact that the themes of the Mathnawi are inspired from on High". Maulana refers to it in the following lines:

"When I ponder about rhyme and stanzas, my Beloved (Allah Ta'ala) says to me:
Think not about rhyming, just ponder over My Countenance.
I will inspire you with the lines. Do not burden your heart with it."

The Story of Hazrat Umar (Radhiallaho Anho) and the Roman Envoy

Once an ambassador of the Emperor of Rome came to Madina bearing many gifts. On arriving, he enquired about the palace of the king of Madina. People answered,

"Our king has no palace. However, our leader, the leader of the believers has a mansion - his respected self- which has a special contact with Allah Ta'ala and which has become enlightened through the splendor of His nearness. Thus, he has become independent of the need for a royal palace. "

They further informed him: "You will find the leader of the believers, Hazrat Umar in the graveyard of Madina". The Roman Ambassador then went to the graveyard and there saw Hazrat Umar lying down, having taken off his shirt with only a sheet covering the lower part of his body. He was lying down fast asleep on the ground with no throne or crown on his head, neither any soldiers nor any bodyguards. But as the ambassador looked at his face, he began shaking with fear. Within himself, he said: "I have seen many great kings in my life and have been the companion and confidant of many rulers. Never, have I feared any king. But, the awe and fear I feel for this one dressed in such tattered clothing is causing my senses to fly. This person without any weapons and without any forces sleeping here alone on the ground. What is it that causes my whole body to shake and tremble in awe of him? Even if I had seven bodies, they would not bear it and all would tremble. " Then the envoy said to himself: "This awe and fear that I feel is not for this one who is dressed in tattered clothes. In fact, this is

fear of Allah Ta'ala for this tattered clothed one has a heart that is blessed with Allah Ta'ala's contact and nearness." Thus this envoy, through the blessings of Hazrat Umar' s company and grace converted to Islam.
Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"He who fears Allah Ta'ala and adopts a life of righteousness, the jinn and men fear him.
And whoever sees him is overpowered by fear and awe."

Lesson

This story teaches us that true honor is brought about by true and deep contact with Allah Ta'ala and not by outward beauty and adornment. But, the foolish while displeasing Allah Ta'ala, and in spite of committing sins, endeavor to acquire honor and respect by building beautiful mansions, dressing in expensive clothes and putting their trust in their businesses.
But we see that honor is only temporary and skin-deep. The very same people who honor them in their presence curse them behind their back. Today, one may be the President of the country, but the moment he vacates or is removed, his honor is no more in the newspapers. Similar is the condition of the kings. However, the friends of Allah Ta'ala, the Auliyaa Allah, are true kings. Hence, they are called Shah. This is their true position and description in this world and they continue to be remembered and honored after their death.

The Story of the Crown of Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam)

Once Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) stood before a mirror and placed the crown on his head. The crown landed on his head in a crooked manner. He again placed it on his head and straightened it, but again it landed crookedly. When for the third time he again straightened it, and again it landed crookedly, he become overwhelmed with fear of Allah Ta'ala. He fell down in prostration and cried in

repentance before Him. Thereafter, he again placed the crown on his head and this time it was straight. Then Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) realized that some action of his must have been disliked by Allah Ta'ala so He has diverted His Countenance from him. Thus, lifeless crown had turned crooked on his head.

Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) was a Prophet and Prophets are sinless. The question that arises in the heart is: "Did any sin take place? Did Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) commit any sin?" The answer is that he committed no sin. Sometimes in their reckoning, the Prophets choose to leave aside the most excellent line of action, preferring at a given moment to adopt another permissible line of action. In such cases, they are punished for having discarded the most excellent line of action. In actual fact, the alternate deed is in itself permissible. Thus, Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) may have committed such an action which Allah Ta'ala disapproved. Another question that arises: The crown is a lifeless thing. So how could the lifeless thing have moved to become crooked on his head? Maulana answers by saying that the four elements; earth, air, water and fire are the basis of all things and their creation. Although these four elements are all lifeless, their contact with Allah Ta'ala is like the contact of living things. All these concrete things and plants understand the orders of Allah Ta'ala and on hearing them are quick to obey.

The Story of How a Person's Mouth became crooked by having Mentioned the Prophet's Name in Jest

A person took the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) mockingly. His face turned skew and remained like that. That unfortunate evil one came to the Prophet and said: "Pardon me, as you have the gift of special knowledge from Him."
Maulana Rumi says:

"When Allah Ta'ala decides to bring disgrace upon someone, He causes him to incline towards mocking the saintly one. This evil inclination also is a consequence of some other sin of his that he begins to taunt the righteous ones. Allah Ta'ala then punishes him with disgrace and humiliation. On the other hand, when Allah Ta'ala desires to hide someone's faults and sins, He helps him not to speak of the faults of faulty ones. And when He desires to favor us with good, He makes us incline towards sighing and crying in front of Him.

Blessed are those eyes which cry in front of that truly Beloved Blessed is that heart which is broiled in His Love.

Where there is flowing water, greenery springs and where tears flow, there Allah Ta'ala's garden blooms."

The Hadith teaches us that there are two drops which are very much loved by Allah Ta'ala: The drop of tear that is shed for fear of Allah Ta'ala and the drop of blood that is shed in the path of Allah Ta'ala.

"When he repented from his courage for committing sins, Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) granted him pardon.

If you desire Allah Ta'ala's mercy, then grant pardon For him who begs pardon from you.

***And if you seek the Mercy of Allah Ta'ala,
Then first show mercy to the weak. "***

The Story Of the 'Night Ruby Lamp' and the Water Cow

The aquatic cow or bull brings forth pearls from the water at night and grazes in the meadows, consuming the iris and odoriferous plants. Its feces are amber in color as a result of its feeding upon such delicate and exquisite plants like narcissus and other sweet-smelling plants. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) mentions it. Thereafter, he states a very precious thing. He says that just as the aquatic bull's food is the

cause of bringing forth sweet-smelling scent, likewise the one whose food consists of Zikr and the obedience to Allah Ta'ala will produce from his lips such words which will be indeed very effective.

"He whose diet consists of Zikr and obedience to Allah Ta'ala, Why should his words not become effective?"

Furthermore, the aquatic cow grazes in the light of the jewel until it moves far away from the pearl. A trader comes along with the aim of taking possession of the pearl. He takes black mud and throws it over the pearl. As a result of this the entire meadow becomes dark as the mud now stops the rays of the pearl from spreading. Meanwhile, the cow walks about in the grazing field in order to attack the opponent with its horns but the opponent sits quite safely among the trees. When the cow despairs of attacking the enemy, it returns to the spot where the pearl is kept, but only sees the mud which now covers the pearl, and runs away.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) after mentioning the above incident gives a beautiful advice. He says that Shaytaan too, seeing the earthly form of Hazrat Adam (Alaihis Salaam) fled like that animal fled on seeing the mud which had covered the ruby. He refused to prostrate before Hazrat Adam (Alaihis Salaam) as Allah Ta'ala had commanded. Instead, he objected saying that he was created from fire, which rises high and is therefore superior to Hazrat Adam (Alaihis Salaam) who was created from dust. The wretched Iblis could not understand that within the earthly form was hidden the soul of the vicegerent of Allah Ta'ala i.e. Nabi Adam (Alaihis Salaam).

"With the command of Allah Ta'ala to Adam (Alaihis Salaam): 'Get thee down', the soul of Hazrat Adam (Alaihis Salaam) Was placed in his body made of earth and water. "

Maulana Rumi continues,

"O friends, discard the search for comforts and avoid arguments and debates and become involved with sulook, as following of lustful desires is the destruction of men.

Just as Iblis was unaware of what lay inside the earthly form likewise the aquatic cow was unaware that the pearl was hidden under the mud.

Lesson

Similarly, the foolish ones of this age, who look at the external poverty and indigent condition of the Ahlullah (friends of Allah Ta'ala) and then compare their condition with their own beautiful mansions and splendid clothing and thus become deceived by these material things. They fail to understand that treasures are buried in that ruined condition. Further, they fail to understand that in that state of worldly deprivation lie true riches and in that state of madness is hidden true intelligence and wisdom. In other words, the Saints of Allah Ta'ala have their sole contact with Allah Ta'ala and one should not be deceived by their poverty. May Allah Ta'ala guide those opponents of the Saints who flee from them. The conclusion to the story is this: The trader is looking from the tree at the water cow and waiting for the foolish one to become fed up with the mud and return to the water, so that he may take the pearl out of the mud and go home successful.

Similarly, in acquiring benefit from the Auliyaa-Allah, one should not look upon their earthly bodies; rather one should recognize the fragrance of Allah Ta'ala emitting from their souls. One should do what Majnoon did when he heard that Layla had passed away. He went to the graveyard and smelled the sand of every grave and when he finally smelled the sand of Layla's grave, he declared, "This is Layla's grave." Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) speaks,

"Like Majnoon I too smell the dust till I find the sand of Layla (i.e. true friends of Allah Ta'ala)
The true seekers of Allah Ta'ala get the fragrance of the Master
From the fragrance of His true devotees and lovers."

By attending a few gatherings, he realizes that within the heart is the special connection with Allah Ta'ala.

Once on a journey, Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) said to the Sahabah, "I smell the fragrance of Allah Ta'ala from the direction of Yemen ". That was the fragrance of Hazrat Uwais Qarni (Rahmatullah Alaihe), who was a great Saint of Allah Ta'ala living in the village of Qarn in Yemen. He was a true lover of Allah Ta'ala and His Messenger. He could not present himself before Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) because he was busy in the service of his mother.

"Said the Prophet: From the direction of Yemen in the air,
I smell the fragrance of Allah Ta'ala. "

According to a Hadith, Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) said: "Verily I find the smell of the Rahman (The Merciful One) from the direction of Yemen." Even today, the true lovers and seekers of Allah Ta'ala find the fragrance of Allah Ta'ala from the Saints and they are not embarrassed or shy to gain benefit from them.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"O Ye enemy of love and shame, come to me.
I have ripped to pieces the curtain of shame
Which prevents obedience to Divine Command."

The Story of the Patience and Tolerance Of Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam)

Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) was a shepherd in the service of Nabi Shuaib (Alaihis Salaam) as mentioned in the Quran. One day, while grazing the goats, a goat ran away. Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) had to run after it so far that his feet became filled with blisters. He walked so far that the rest of the flock too could not be seen anymore. Finally, the goat became tired and came to a standstill and Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) caught it. Instead of being angry with the goat or beating it, he rubbed sympathetically around its neck, back and head. Like a mother, he acted kindly to the animal and although having suffered so much pain himself, did not in any way show his displeasure. In fact, he felt sorry for the animal so

much that tears came to his eyes. He said to the goat, "I thought that you had no mercy upon me. That is why you made me so exhausted. But why did you not have mercy upon yourself. If you had no mercy upon the blisters upon my feet and the thorns that pricked me, then at least you should have had mercy upon yourself. "

At that moment, Allah Ta'ala said to the Angels, "Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) is now suited for Prophethood." (In other words: The ability to withstand the sorrows of the Ummat and to withstand the injuries from their side and the heart to bear all difficulties).

Allah Ta'ala said to the angels:

For the Prophethood of this era,
Moosa is the suitable person. "

"Nabi Mustapha (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) has said that before acquiring Prophethood,
Every Prophet used to be a shepherd".

This is also mentioned in a Hadith of Bukhari Sharif and Maulana discussed the wisdom in that:

"So that through grazing sheep and goats,
The Prophet's patience and dignity may be exposed.

The reason they are made to rear goats is,
To teach them patience and gentleness amidst adversity. "

Someone inquired of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam): "Did you also look after sheep, O Best of Creation?" He replied: "Yes, indeed, I also at one time was a shepherd." "Allah Ta'ala, after this herding of sheep, grants spiritual shepherd hood and after delivering the duty of a shepherd, He grants the Prophets the position of spiritual herdsman." It is said that being a herdsman inculcates tolerance and clemency as sheep and goats have the habit of wandering away in all directions. Thus, the herdsman has a great problem in gathering them together just as Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) was troubled in the above story.

The Story of Hazrat Safoora (Alaihas Salaam)

The special manifestation of Allah Ta'ala on Mount Tur (Sinai) caused the mountain to crumble and Hazrat Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) to fall unconscious. When he regained consciousness and returned home, for some days, his face still had such a glow that whosoever looked at his face directly was dazzled and became blind. He, therefore, prayed to Allah Ta'ala that He grant a veil over the Noor on his face so that people's eyes may be saved from damage.

Allah Ta'ala ordered him to cover His face with a part of that blanket with which he covered himself on Mount Tur and which was able to bear the intensity of that Noor on that mountain.

***"For apart from that blanket O Moosa,
Even if Mount Qaaf tries to block that Noor from your face it too will be shattered"***

It is through the power of Allah Ta'ala that the saintly ones are able to bear the Noor of Allah Ta'ala. That Noor which Mount Tur could not bear, Allah Ta'ala through His power has made the hearts into a mirror so that they can reflect the Light. Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) mentions this in a Hadith e Qudsi that Allah Ta'ala says, "The skies and the earth could not contain Me, and neither could the minds nor the selves of men. However, in the heart of a believer I am contained like a guest who is given full access and control over the residence of the host." In this Hadith 'contained like a guest' is to indicate the honor and respect together with love. 'Contained', here does not indicate being inside a specific space as Allah Ta'ala is free from being' contained' in any space.

"Without such a mirror no one could bear to look upon My beauty, neither on this earth nor in the Heavens."

The story continues: Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) made a face covering from the blanket and prohibited the people

from staring at his face without this veil. The piece of blanket did the job which doors and walls could not do. Even if the veil had been made of iron, it too would have melted due to the Noor that remained on Nabi Moosa's (Alaihis Salaam) face, after the shining of splendor on Mount Tur. The veil had been in touch with the warmth of Divine Love and at the time of its burning blaze, it was part of the clothing of a Saint of Allah Ta'ala. For this reason, it could now be used as a curtain for the Noor that was shining from Nabi Moosa's (Alaihis Salaam) face. Hazrat Safoora, the wife of Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam), was a great lover of his Prophethood. She became restless and impatient of this veil. Her love became so overwhelming that she looked directly at the face of Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) with one eye. Immediately, she lost her eyesight. Still, she could not have patience. She opened her other eye and that one also lost its sight.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) explained that a seeker of Allah Ta'ala initially offers bread in the path of Allah Ta'ala. In other words, he is prepared to offer the strength which is created by the nourishment and offers this towards acquiring the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. However, as the Noor of obedience begins to have effect upon him, he is prepared to offer even his life in the path of Allah Ta'ala. At that time, a woman asked Hazrat Safoora:

"Do you have any regret over the loss of your eye sight?" She replied, "My great sorrow is this that I do not have a hundred or a thousand eyes, if I did, I would sacrifice them all in order to see the Noor of Nabi Moosa's (Alaihis Salaam) countenance." Allah Ta'ala so approved of this reply of Hazrat Safoora and her great love for Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) that she was granted her eyesight once again. Her sight in both the eyes was returned in such a manner that she could look directly upon Nabi Moosa's (Alaihis Salaam) face. She was granted such strength in her eyesight that she would never lose it when looking at Nabi Moosa's (Alaihis Salaam) face.

The Story of the Friendship between a Frog and a Mouse

Once on the bank of a river there lived a mouse and a frog. A very close friendship developed between them. This friendship grew until it became a love relationship. By mutual arrangement, they used to meet each other daily in the mornings and would converse with each other for hours. These meetings made both of them very happy. They used to tell stories to each other and listened to each other's tales. They even told each other their secrets and considered each other as their sole confident. When they met, they even remembered and related happenings of more than five years ago, to each other.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"The excitement of eloquence and conversation from the heart is a sign of love
And when there is a termination of eloquence, it is a sign of lack of love.

How can that heart which had seen its loved one ever remain stern and harsh?
And when the nightingale has seen a flower, how can it ever remain silent?

When a lover sits in the company of a lover,
Thousands of stories are remembered by the heart.

The Lowhul-Mahfooz (Preserved Tablet) is the forehead of a Beloved
Which exposes the secrets of the worlds to the Lover."

"The guide to the path of guidance - Sayedina Mustafa Muhammad had said:

'My companions are like the stars in providing guidance.

Explanation:

Maulana Rumi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) objective in mentioning these couplets is to indicate that just as love and

friendship between two worldly lovers becomes a means towards exposing their secrets to each other, likewise love between the people for the sake of Allah Ta'ala and their meeting with each other becomes the exposition of true love. Hence, where Allah Ta'ala is the object of love as in the case where a Mureed has love for his spiritual guide, this relationship guides towards the truth. Thus, when a Mureed sits in the company of his Shaikh, much unknown knowledge becomes known to him. From the heart of the Shaikh blessings and knowledge, which he could not experience upto that time, are reflected onto him. This is the everyday experience of the seekers in the path of Tasawwuf.

The words in the couplet "The forehead of the beloved being the Preserved Tablet - Lowhul Mahfooz"

Maulana meant: The Mureed through his meeting with his Shaikh and being in his company acquires wonderful forms of knowledge. His heart heals from various illnesses and in his contact with Allah Ta'ala there is a definite increase and progress.

Thereafter, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) draws attention to another fact. The stars are the guiding lines on this earth for as long as one does not kick up the dust and make the air polluted. If the air between oneself and the stars is polluted with dust, then one is unable to find guidance in the stars. Similarly, if one sits in the company of the saintly ones, one should sit quietly, awaiting their instructions and listen attentively to their teachings. One should not kick up the dust by becoming involved with arguments, unnecessary conversation, objections or rejections, because through arguments and objections, the heart of the Shaikh will be disturbed and it will stop exuding the beneficial blessings.

This does not mean that a person should not talk at all in the presence of his Shaikh, as this action will also cause the stopping of blessings. It must be remembered that the Shaikh does not have knowledge of all the needs of the Mureed. Hence, the Mureed should inform the Shaikh of his inner conditions and of his spiritual state and experiences. The

Mureed should remain silent and refrain from unnecessary talks, arguments and objections. .

"When one has drunk the love of Allah Ta'ala from a spiritual guide,
Then even if he is dumb, he will be filled with eloquence of speech."

This means that through the company of the saintly ones, when love for Allah Ta'ala is created in the heart, then even the uneducated and illiterate ones will be able to expound great lessons of guidance. In this regard, we may refer to Hazrat Hajee Imdadullah Saheb (Rahmatullah Alaihe). He only studied Arabic up to Kaafiya and yet he later became the Shaikh of numerous Ulama, Scholars of Hadith and Tafseer.

"When Nabi Dawood (Alaihis Salaam) had drunk from the love of Allah Ta'ala, through his lips,
He learnt hundreds of beautiful hymns of praise to sing to the Lord.

So much so that all the birds left aside their chirping noise
And proceeded to listen to his voice and accompany him."

The story continues:
One day the mouse told the frog: "You are swimming around in the water while I am here on the dry earth. I suffer the pangs of separation from you. I come to the edge of the water to call you, but while you are in the water, even the voice of a lover cannot be heard. I am not happy with just meeting and talking to you for a short while". Salaah has only been made obligatory five times a day, but the true lovers of Allah Ta'ala permanently enjoy communion with Allah Ta'ala through optional prayers.

نیست زرغبا نشان عاشقاں

سخت مستسقی است جان صادقاں

"To be called from time to time for meeting a beloved is not for lovers,
The souls of true lovers remain thirsty at all times.

نیست زر غبا وظیفہ ماہیاں

زاکہ بے دریا ندارند انس جاں

To skip meeting with the beloved is not for the fish,
For they will find no rest without water.

The heart of the lover is nothing without the Beloved,
There is between them no separator nor separation. "

Explanation:

Maulana's object in mentioning these couplets is a reference to the Hadith which says that meeting each other with intervals of a day, increases the love for each other. However, true lovers are exempted from this statement as Hazrat Abu Hurairah (Radhiallaho Anho) reports:

كُنْتُ اَلْزَمُ لِصُحْبَتِهٖ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

"I used to make obligatory upon myself the company of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) at all times".

Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) did not prohibit it; which meant that he considered it permissible. Hence, the first statement is a general one, while the latter one, is for special friends. The Prophet made the first statement at a time when he asked Hazrat Abu Hurairah (Radhiallaho Anho): "O Abu Hurairah, where were you yesterday?" He replied: "Yesterday, I went to visit some relatives". Then Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) said: "Meeting after a day's break in between will increase love". There seems to be a contradiction between the two statements. However, this is not the case. Reconciliation between the two statements is this: To make someone's company compulsory at all times, as Abu Hurairah (Radhiallaho Anho) did, refers to those situations where the bond of love is very strong. The other situation of meeting at specific times refers to those situations where the contact of love is of a lesser degree.

"For a lover, the separation for even a moment is like a year's separation
And the meeting lasting a whole year is mere imagination."

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) further explains that the people of this world have a good understanding of worldly love, but as regards to Divine Love, which is bestowed to the Prophets and the friends of Allah Ta'ala, they fail to comprehend. That is because they are caught up behind the curtain of this world's external comforts and are deprived of the grace of Allah Ta'ala's love which annihilates the needs of the self. Hence, only those who annihilate their selves gain this blessing. It is not attained through reasoning alone.

"If through reason the perception of Allah Ta'ala's love was possible,
Then of what use would spiritual strivings be?

In spite of the great mercy of having Allah Ta'ala ~ The Master of Reason
Why the command: Oppose yourself and overpower your desires was given?"

It is through these strenuous spiritual exercises that the self becomes overpowered and annihilated. The recognition of Allah Ta'ala is dependent upon it. Maulana Sayyed Sulaiman Nadwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) asked Hazrat Maulana Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe): "Hazrat! What is the meaning of 'faqiri'?" Hazrat Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) replied: "It means annihilating your 'self."

The story continues:

The mouse then said to the frog, "O beloved frog, without seeing you, I cannot find peace. By day, the sight of you is my life, by night the thought of you is my consolation and sleep. It will be a great favor on your part if you will permit me the pleasure of the opportunity of meeting you at all times."

"It will be great generosity on your part if you will cause me the delight

Of remembering me at all times with your love.

You are unconcerned with my sorrows. O, my leader!
Kindly grant me thy kindness and please me with your company. "

Now Maulana returns to the object of the story, i.e. to return to Allah Ta'ala.

"O Allah Ta'ala, this indigent one without manners is most unsuited, but Your Grace is all over, higher and supreme.
O Allah Ta'ala, Your general Grace does not search for credentials or ability and the sun of Your generosity even has effect on impurities.

The sun has warmed the belly of the earth
Which warmth has pulled impurities into its midst.
Those impurities have become part of the earth and created plants
And in this manner Allah Ta'ala wipes out sins.

If such is the robe of honor given to the evil ones,
How much more honorable will be the gift to the righteous ones?

For His special bondsmen Allah Ta'ala prepares what no eye has seen,
And no tongue or language can ever describe.

Who are we? You kindly explain who we are?
O My Beloved, enlighten my day with beautiful morals. "

Explanation:

Maulana describes 'Allah Ta'ala's wonderful actions by saying: "O Allah Ta'ala, when out of Your kindness, the rays of the sun fall upon the earth; it enlightens it, when it falls on impurities like dung it dries the solid part and converts it to fuel, which lights the furnace. Another portion (i.e. the liquid part of the dung) is absorbed into the earth acting as a fertilizer for plants and fragrant flowers. The heat of the sun warms the earth and makes it absorb the liquid impurities. O Allah Ta'ala,

impurities too are not deprived of Your bounty, what will be Your generosity towards the righteous servants and lovers of Thee. You will grant such bounties which neither the eyes have seen, nor ears have heard nor has the thought of which passed through the minds of men as mentioned in a Hadith:

أَعْدَدْتُ لِعِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحِيْنَ مَا لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ وَلَا أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ وَلَا خَطَرَ عَلٰى قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ

"I have prepared for my righteous servants what no eye has seen, no ear has heard nor has passed through the minds of anyone."

Thereafter Maulana says: When someone is inspired with knowledge from the unseen, it is an indication that Allah Ta'ala's special Glance and Generosity is upon him. Maulana describes it in the following manner:

"When on the banks of a river 'you notice greenery,
Then you can ascertain that water is present there."

Allah Ta'ala says: "The faces of my Messenger's companions are covered with a veneer of Noor from their hearts and this Noor is an indication of much worship and Istighfaar (repentance)." He then, in another couplet, mentions another example viz. The greenery of the meadows signifies rainfall.

"If by night rain fell while you were asleep and unaware,
Then in the morning if you see the garden luxuriant and fresh,
You should understand that last night rain fell. Every beautiful garden's freshness is an indication of rain having fallen. "

The story continues:

The mouse told the frog: "Brother, I am a creature living on dry land and you live in the water. I am unable to enter the water, but you are able to come to land. But how will you be able to know, inside the water, that I have a desire to meet you?" For quite a time they discussed the problem and consulted each other. Finally, the mouse put forward a

suggestion that one end of a piece of string the frog should tie to its leg and the other end to the foot of the mouse. Thus, when the mouse desired to meet the frog he will pull the string. In the water, the frog would feel the pulling of the string and thus come to the bank of the river. In this way, they would be able to meet each other. The frog considered the mouse's suggestion to be a bad one and said to himself: "This evil minded one wishes to tie me up." "It is no surprise if a blind person falls into a well; what is surprising is when a person of sight falls into it." In spite of disliking the mouse's suggestion, the frog found an inclination within himself to accede to the request. When a person's desire overpowers reason, it is the beginning of decline.

Maulana then proceeds to relate the story of the frog's destruction. The two of them, by pulling the string, were able to enjoy the ecstasy of meeting each other repeatedly. Then one day the result of this bad company became a reality. A vulture came along and carried the mouse off in its claw. As the vulture flew off with the mouse, he also lifted the frog out of the water where up to now he was safe and comfortable, because the other end was tied to his leg. What happened to the mouse also happened to the frog. The vulture killed both of them and ate them up. If the frog had remained in the water and not formed a friendship with the evil mouse, then nothing would have happened to him and he would have remained safe.

Lesson

In this story, Maulana has drawn our attention to the harm of bad company. It is a good story with a powerful moral. In the story, we see the soul, the self and Shaytaan. The "Nafs-e-Ammaarah (evil Nafs)" is the evil mouse. The soul is the frog which lives in the water of Allah Ta'ala's nearness, which is its proper place. The vulture represents the Shaytaan or devil. The Nafs (Self) in order to satisfy its desires tries to engage the soul in evil doings and endeavors to tie it with a string. Where the soul obeys the desires of the Self and makes contact with the

Self, then Shaytaan will pull it along wherever it wishes. In this way the soul is also humiliated because of its contact with the 'Self'. Hence, when Shaytaan will go to Hell, the Nafs (Self) which was in its claws will also go to Hell accompanied by the soul as well, which had befriended the self in sin.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the ability to learn a lesson from this story and may He grant us protection against the Self and the Shaytaan in the following manner: No matter what unlawful pleasures are placed in front of us by the Inner-self, do not even turn your attention to them. Consider the Nafs to be your arc enemy, for it is an even bigger enemy than Shaytaan. When the whisperings of Shaytaan come to you, continue to recite 'Laa Howla Walaa Quwwata Illah Billah'.

Live in the shadow and company of a saintly Shaikh and derive benefit from his knowledge and instructions. Remember that Shaytaan's control only comes when our soul makes a mutual agreement with the 'Nafs'. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance for us to oppose the accursed 'Nafs' with the aim of avoiding the mischief of Shaytaan. The one who conquers his 'Self' will Insha-Allah be able to conquer Shaytaan. The conquest of the 'Self' is not an easy task unless one forms a close contact with a saintly spiritual guide. Close contact here denotes a relationship of love and respect and choosing the guide in accordance with one's temperament. Furthermore, it means acting upon the instructions of the Shaikh, informing him of your spiritual state and consulting him for advice. In a couple of days, a complete transformation will take place for the better. The Shaikh must be one who follows the Shariah in all respects and has been himself reformed by a perfect Shaikh.

نہ کتابوں سے نہ وعظوں سے نہ زر سے پیدا

دین ہوتا ہے بزرگوں کی نظر سے پیدا

"Neither from books, nor from lecturing nor from wealth
Deen comes alive by the glances of the Saintly ones. "
(Akbar Ilahabadi)

The Story of the Parrot and the Shopkeeper

A certain shopkeeper kept a green parrot as a pet. It had a very melodious voice. The shopkeeper loved the parrot greatly because it used to speak a lot and entertain the customers. One day while shopkeeper was out, a cat came chasing after a mouse. The parrot felt that the cat was trying to attack him and thus flew to one side, to avoid being caught. As he flew, a bottle of almond oil fell down and the oil spilled over. When the shopkeeper came back, he noticed the oil on the floor mat and immediately realized that the almond oil had been spilled. He became so angry that he struck the parrot on its head a number of times, so that the parrot became bald. The parrot became so displeased with the shopkeeper that from that day onwards it stopped talking.

The parrot's silence caused the shopkeeper great anguish. He was very sorry and wondered what to do in order to make the parrot speak again, as its speech had provided him great pleasure. For many days, he tried to please the parrot through flattery, but the parrot remained silent. He fed the parrot various kinds of fruit in order to make him happy, but still it would not speak. Even the clients who came to the shop, were surprised at the parrot's silence and were sorry at this state of affairs.

One day a beggar, covered in a blanket and having a bald head went past the shop. On seeing the bald-headed beggar, the parrot spoke in a loud voice: "O bald-headed one, how did you become bald? You must have also spilled a bottle of oil". Through this analogy drawn by the parrot, people began laughing that the parrot's conclusion of comparing the bald-headed beggar to himself. Now Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) returns to the story and gives the advise:

"O Loved One, do not compare the Saintly people with yourself. For although 'sheir' (milk) and 'sher' (lion) are spelt the same (in Urdu), yet they are both different things."

'Sheir' (milk) is something consumed by men and 'sher' (lion) is an animal which consumes men. The whole world has strayed because of these inappropriate comparisons because people are seldom aware of the position of the friends of Allah Ta'ala. The ill-fortuned are deprived, their eyes are incapable of perceiving the truth. Good and evil appears the same to them. Through their wrong analogies, they have claimed equality with the Prophets. Furthermore, they consider themselves equal to the Saints, and if anyone objects, they reply:

We are men and so are they.
We both eat and sleep.
So what difference is there between them and us?"

Now Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) explains that if the outer form of two things is the same, then it does not necessarily mean that they are the same in all aspects. He then explains the differences through a few examples.

One

The wasp and the bee, both suck nectar from flowers. Their food is the same. However, the wasp merely produces a poisonous sting while the bee produces sweet honey.

Two

You will find two kinds of deer feeding on the same type of grass. In one of the deer, the grass becomes dung while in the other one, it becomes fragrant musk.

Three

Two types of bamboo are watered by the same water. The one ends up being hollow, while the other one produces sugar, as in sugar cane.

Four

An evil person eats bread and that bread creates within him stinginess, jealousy and evil desires. That same bread is also

consumed by a pious person, but it creates Divine Love and Knowledge within him.

Five

Outwardly brackish water and sweet water appear to be the same but how much different are they? Similarly, an ill fortune person and a good-fortune person appear to be the same. When we see their outward form, they are the same, but are they the same in their life style and manners?

Six

Whatever a man does, an ape can also do but how different is a man from an ape?

Seven

In a similar manner, ignorant ones have looked at miracles and compared them with sorcery. A miracle is in fact from the Mercy of Allah Ta'ala which is granted to the Saintly ones, whereas sorcery is Allah Ta'ala's curse which comes through the evil-minded and the rejected.

Eight

Outwardly, the deeds of a believer and a hypocrite appear to be the same, but in reality, there is a vast difference between the two. How great is the difference in the results of both? The former leads to paradise and the latter leads' to Hell fire. '

Nine

Pure and impure gold both have the same appearance, but when both of them are tested, see how different the value of one is from the other.

Lesson:

The lesson here is that one should not compare oneself with the Saints of Allah Ta'ala. Look at their inner conditions of nearness to Allah Ta'ala and connection with Him, which is the envy of all the kings of this world. Derive benefit from them

and do not consider them to be like yourself. The value of a container depends upon its contents. Similar is the case with man's body, if it is honored with great contact with Allah Ta'ala, then it is very precious.

Let us take two bottles. Each bottle is worth a mere rupee. Thus, we fill one bottle with a perfume worth five thousand rupees and the other one we fill with water. The second bottle will be worth just that one rupee while the other one will be worth five thousand rupees. If urine is filled in it, it will then not even be worth the one rupee. So how can it be correct to compare one bottle to the other?

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the ability to honor and respect the greatness of His righteous Saintly servants and save us from drawing foolish analogies and comparisons, so that we may benefit from their teachings and also acquire the eagerness to learn from them. May our wrong perceptions not be an obstacle towards acquiring benefit from them, Ameen.

The Story of the Ungratefulness of Namrood

Allah Ta'ala once asked Hazrat Izraeel (the Angel of Death): "Of all the people whose souls you have taken, for whom did you feel the most sympathy?" He replied: "Over all of them, but in the carrying out of Your orders, I submit myself". Allah Ta'ala asked: "But on which occasion did your heart feel the most grief? He replied: "O Lord, there was one occasion when my heart was very much filled with pity and compassion. Once on Your command when the waves of the sea were very strong and high, we broke a boat into pieces. Then You commanded that all those on board should be drowned except one woman and her baby. All of them died except the woman and her child, who remained alive on a raft. The waves of the sea caused the raft to be driven along until the wind caused the raft to be brought near the coast. I was very pleased to see that they were near safety. Then the order came from You that the mother's soul be taken, while the baby

should be left alone. At Your command, I took the soul of the mother and the two of them were separated by death. You can well imagine how unpleasant it must have been for me. You can imagine what passed through my heart at that time. You know all, but I was under Your command and obeyed. Who is there that can rebel against Your command?"

"No one has the right to demand the why and wherefore of Your commands and decisions.
To You alone belongs the true kingdom and decision."

Hazrat Izraeel continued: "O Lord, on taking the soul of the mother, I felt great sorrow and to this day, I have not forgotten the helplessness of that baby and its destitution"

Allah Ta'ala replied: "Now listen to what happened to that baby afterwards. Listen to how I reared that child. I commanded the waves to throw that baby in such a forest where there are lilies, sweet-smelling plants and fragrant flowers and where there are fruit 'trees and fountains bringing forth sweet waters. There I reared him. Numerous birds with beautiful voices used to sing beautiful melodies in his presence. I made his bed from the leaves of the wild rose tree so that he may be safe from all trials. I commanded the sun not to shine on him with strong rays and to be considerate of him. I commanded the wind to blow over him gently and kindly. I commanded the clouds not to let the rain fall on him. Lightening was commanded not to strike him. The season of autumn was commanded not to remove the moderate weather from his garden. The result was that the garden where he lived was like the soul of the saintly ones protected against cold, violent winds and warm pestilential winds.

I commanded a leopard, to give this baby milk to drink and the leopard did this until the baby grew into a grown-up child. When the time came for it to stop drinking milk, I commanded the Jinns to teach him how to communicate and to teach him the method of governing a kingdom. In this wonderful and astonishing way, I reared and nourished him. So is My handling strange and wonderful! I nourished the

worms in the body of Nabi Ayoub (Alaihis Salaam) and granted him such feeling for the worms just like a father over his children, so much so that when a worm came out of his body, he used to feel as if his children were being separated from him.

"I gave to Ayoub feelings of sympathy like a father,
Acting like a host to worms without any harm to them".

"I taught all mothers what love is,
What a lamp that is, which I have enlightened".

"Thus, I showed that child My numerous favors and numerous ways of My grace so that he could see My grace and generosity without adopting any means. This was done to prevent him from becoming involved with the problem of looking for the means, because sometimes the causes of the means are different. Further, I did all that so that the child should in future seek help from Me alone, because the Provider of means was not hidden behind veils and curtains." In other words, to be nourished and reared without any means would entail that he should not look towards anyone else, so that he should have no excuse to go astray. He will not be able to provide the excuse that by having seen the means, he failed to pay attention to Allah Ta'ala's favors and bounties.

"But, O Izraeel, how did that child show gratitude to Me? That child became Namrood and he was the one who wanted to burn My friend, Ibrahim (Alaihis Salaam) alive. That was his intention but I made that fire of Namrood a rose - garden of safety."

Now Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says: This Nafs (self) is a very dangerous enemy. One should always seek refuge from it. For others, the nourishment by the mother and the father becomes a curtain, but this unfortunate one used to receive many pearls from Allah Ta'ala directly.

"This Nafs is a fierce wolf of prey,
So on every friend will he place the blame for going astray.

This I say, O poor servant of Allah Ta'ala, do not set free the chained dog
Control the Nafs and should you be overcome, develop contact with a saintly one

So that through his company and dua'a you may succeed.
But search for such a guide who is awake in all situations
So that you too may become awake

And if you should remain in the company of the vanquished,
You too will become vanquished".

In other words, the effect upon you will be according to the company you keep, as the company is a seed.
What you sow is what you will reap.

The Wisdom of Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam)

When Hazrat Luqmaan's (Alaihis Salaam) Master bought him, the other slaves looked upon him as being despicable. One day the Master sent all of them into the garden to pick fruit. All the slaves started eating the fruit. They ate to their heart's delight and went to inform the Master that Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) had eaten the fruit. This made the Master very much displeased with Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam). Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) advised the Master: "Please investigate this matter thoroughly. I did not eat the fruit. I will tell you a plan which will prove who the culprits were. The whole truth will become clear to you. Make preparations for hunting". From the stable, the master ordered that horses be brought. The Master sat down on his horse. Then Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) said: "Proceed speedily in the direction of the desert. But before you proceed give everyone of the slaves, warm water to drink. Let everyone drink himself to the full with warm water. Very soon you will discover who the real culprits are".

The result was that when those who had eaten the fruit were forced to run along, the quick movements caused them to start vomiting. That was because after drinking hot water, the fast movements caused their stomachs to become even more heated. Moreover, the path they trod which led to the desert was an uneven one, with ups and downs. This made vomiting unavoidable. In the vomit, the signs of their having eaten the fruit was quite clear, because the time which passed since they had eaten was too short for the fruit to be digested. Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) did not vomit as there was no fruit in his stomach.

Through the wise plan of Hazrat Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) all the slaves were put to shame and were embarrassed. The Master became very pleased with the wisdom of the plan and as a result Luqmaan (Alaihis Salaam) became a favorite of the Master. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says: "When such is the wisdom of Luqmaan (AS.), imagine the wisdom of the True Master of all."

The Story of the Acceptance of "Aah"

A certain saintly man used to always perform his salaah with the congregation in the mosque. One day as usual he went to the mosque for salaah. As he reached the door of the mosque, he heard the voice of the Imam saying: "Assalaamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatullah" indicating that the congregational salaah had ended. Realizing that he had missed the congregational salaah, the pious man was filled with so much sorrow that he sighed: "Ah!" Such a sigh came right from the depths of his heart.

"The saintly man missed the congregation and 'Ah!' was uttered in sorrow and in his 'Ah' the blood of his heart could be smelt".

Inside the mosque, there was another saintly person with a spiritual insight. When he came out of the mosque, he saw a celestial light, which went right up to the Throne of Allah

Ta'ala. He discovered that the light was the sigh of the person who had missed the congregational prayer. He said to the pious one: "Hazrat give me that 'Ah!' and in exchange accept my Salaah which was performed with the congregation."

The saint did not, at the time, understand the real value of his "Ah!" and exchanged it for the Salaah with congregation. That night the other saint saw a dream wherein a voice from heaven said to him: "O man, you have purchased and acquired the water of life, the water of health and have made a very good exchange in getting that 'Ah!' because that sigh was uttered in the fullest sincerity".

"That night a messenger from on high brought the message that through that transaction he had acquired the water of life and of health.
And said: Through this transaction that you have made,
Allah Ta'ala has accepted the Salaah of all mankind of the present time."

Lesson

From this story, we learn the following things:
One should not look down upon anyone. Sometimes even a great sinner repents so sincerely, with such a presence of heart and in such a heart-rending manner that his repentance becomes superior to all his other deeds, with the result that we do not know from where to where he reaches.
Maulana says:

"Taubah (repentance) is a strange means of conveyance. It causes one to reach speedily from humbleness and lowliness Up to acceptance and great heights".

From this, we also learn that when there are shortcomings and faults in our deeds, we should have sorrow, grief and remorse and we should cry before Allah Ta'ala seeking forgiveness and pardon. In the story all that was included in one" Ah!"

Another key lesson is the importance of performing Salaah with the congregation.

The Story about the Different Opinions on an Elephant

In a certain country no one had ever seen an elephant. The first elephant that was brought to this country was from India. It was placed in a dark building where one could not see the dark colored elephant. Many viewers came along to see the animal. They were allowed to touch the elephant and then draw conclusions as to what is an elephant. According to the part of the elephant they touched, they drew their conclusions and in this manner, each one had a different opinion.

The one who touched the ears of the elephant exclaimed, “It is like a huge fan.” The one who touched its back exclaimed, "The elephant is like a platform". The one who touched its leg exclaimed, "No, you are all wrong. This is like a pillar". The one who touched the trunk of the elephant said, "According to my opinion, this elephant is long and hollow within".

In this manner, all of them had different versions of an elephant. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) now says that if they had a lamp in their hands, all these differences of opinion would have disappeared.

"If everyone of them had a lamp in his hand, They would all have been safe from differing".

Lesson:

These days there are many differences of opinion regarding the concept of Allah Ta'ala, Messengership, Prophethood, the aim and object of life on earth and the resurrection. Many people, in this darkened world, independent of the light of revelation try to understand the links between the worldly life and the life of the Hereafter. They try to understand the relationship between the Creator and His creation solely through reason. They are all like the

people mentioned in this story. Not one of them will be able to reach the truth.

One blind man, whether he tries to tread the path on his own or by following another blind man, in both cases, will head towards destruction and be deprived of reaching the required destination. If the traveler and the guide are both blind - no matter how many they may be, the sum total will still be blindness. Hence, to understand the reality of things, logic and reason alone is not enough. The Light of revelation is also required. In the story all those who touched the elephant, were rational beings, the only thing missing was light. Thus, Muslims should not look towards men of science and philosophy to research the affairs of the Hereafter and fix the object of human life on earth. Those men of science and philosophy lack the light of revelation and as such, they will conclude that man is just a machine which manufactures feces. They will conclude that the object of this life is merely to eat, drink and defecate - nothing else.

The light to which we refer is Divine Revelation, it is the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam). The very light which was revealed in the Cave of Hira, fourteen centuries ago. May Allah Ta'ala protect us from any modern light.

"O new light, may your face be blackened.
In your heart is darkness and your outside is enlightened".

The Vain Imagination of a Fly

A donkey urinated so much that as it flowed away, blades of grass started flowing with it. A fly sat on one of the dry blades of grass as it flowed away on top of the urine. It felt as if it was sailing along on the ocean and imagined the flowing blade of grass to be his boat. In comparison with other flies, he felt himself to be superior. Never before did he feel this superiority. He felt inclined to announce his superiority and high rank and said:

A fly on a blade of grass sailing along in a donkey's urine
Like a ship, shakes his head and announces:
"I have studied the sea and sailed by boat
And in this study have I spent quite a time".

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) explains: Just as this fly is involved with a greatly foolish notion, so, too, are the misguided intelligentsia of our age who term their imaginations and crooked thoughts to be research. They consider it insulting and humiliating for them to derive benefit from Divine Revelation. They consider it perfect to invite humanity to those false ideologies. Maulana gives advice to those stupid ones:

"He who with his wrong interpretations turns away from Divine Revelation
Is like that fly on the blade of grass sailing along in the donkey's urine. "

This person looks upon his imagination and ideas as his saving grace and means of success, and even tries to make Divine Revelation subject to his own opinions. At every step, he is bound to say: "I think this or that", "My opinion is this ". He goes so far as to pass Judgment on those matters of Deen on which there is a general consensus of agreement, and even those aspects which are proven through continuous authentic transmission. He even wants to impose his views over the judgments of the Sahabah and their beliefs. Such a person is in the same boat as the fly in this story. He is like the fly flowing along on a blade of grass in the urine of a donkey; imagining that he is an expert sailor.
Thereafter, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) shows the way in which such a person can reform himself:

"If the fly does not enter wrong interpretation into his opinion.
And repent from wrong interpretations.
Fate will make that fly become blessed".

In other words, the fly will become so full of blessings that he will be saved from having to sit on feces and from being mixed with impurities. He will then enter the ranks of the pure ones.

The author of these lines says that Maulana's reference in this couplet is to the Quranic verse:

إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِيْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا

"And conjecture avails nothing against truth."

And the verse,

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيْلَ مَنْ اَنَابَ اِلَيَّ

"And follow the path of him who returns (in repentance) to Me".

The Story about the Treatment for a Tanner

One day a skin tanner was passing by the perfume shops in the market place. He had spent all his time with the tanning animal skins and had become used to the bad smell. So much so that when he smelled the fragrant smell of the scent, he could not bear it and fell unconscious. A big crowd gathered around him. Some were reciting Wazeefas and blowing over him in an effort to revive him. Others were sprinkling rose water on him. While some were massaging the palms of his hands and feet. In spite of all these efforts, he did not recover and seemed to be sinking deeper into unconsciousness. His brother heard what had happened and came running along. He smelt the fragrant scents and immediately understood that the scents were the cause of his unconsciousness. He announced, "Let no rose water be sprinkled over him. And let no fragrant scents be brought near him". The brother went away and brought some feces of a dog, hidden in the sleeve of his shirt. Moving through the crowd, he came to his brother and held the dog's feces to his nose. The bad smell of the feces immediately revived him. The people were surprised, wondering what strong perfume the brother had brought, which was not even found in those perfume selling shops.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"His brother came along with dog's feces hidden in his sleeve and forcing his way through the crowd came to his brother.
He brought his head near to the brother as if to tell him a secret and then brought the dog's feces to his nose and he was revived."

Lesson

Those who become perplexed and agitated at the sweet-smell of Allah Ta'ala's and His Rasul's obedience and those who are not inclined to a life of following the Sunnah, should be considered as having the same sickness as the tanner. In their dirty way of living and the dirty environment of sin, they spend a whole lifetime, so their hearts and minds become familiar with those things and are inclined towards them.
The way of getting them to change is to gradually get them out of that environment of sin and to make them wander around in the fragrant gardens. They should be brought to the gatherings of the saintly ones. After frequenting these places for a couple of days, they will say, "In what dirty environment were we?" Then thinking about the life of the past, they will cry, sigh, and will be very grateful for the company of the righteous ones. Thus, gradually their noses will become used to the fragrant scents (i.e. in the love and service of Allah Ta'ala) and will be able to say:
"It is as if day and night I am living in paradise,
All these flowers are embroidered on the garden of my heart."

The Story of the Bewitched Prince

There was a king who had only one son. The prince was quite handsome and bore a good character. It was the king's desire and intention to have his son married to a beautiful princess and in this regard, he started talking to a religiously minded and righteous family. However, the queen started having second thoughts. She said to king: "You are looking at righteousness and fear of God, but you do not see

that these people are inferior to you as far as honor, respect and wealth are concerned". The king replied: "Begone! O Foolish One, he who chooses the sorrow of concern of Deen, Allah Ta'ala will remove all other worldly sorrows from Him".

Explanation:

The cares of the Hereafter are like the staff of Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam), which swallowed all the snakes of the sorcerers. Similarly, the sorrow and concern for the Hereafter, swallows all the sorrows of the world. In this respect, let us look at the couplets of the humble author of these lines:

ہو آزاد فوراً غم دو جہاں سے

ترا ذرۂ غم اگر ہاتھ آئے

"You will be freed from the worries of both worlds,
If you have concern in you for the Hereafter".

At last, the king managed to persuade his wife, so the prince was married to the beautiful princess. After the marriage, they waited a long time but there was no sign of the princess bringing forth any offspring. This caused the king great worry. He thought: "What could be wrong? This princess is pretty and young. Why is she not conceiving?" The king secretly gathered his advisors and consulted with the Ulama and saintly ones. At last, it was discovered that the prince was under a spell from an old woman who had bewitched him. As a result, he felt great dislike and aversion towards his wife and used to go to the ugly old woman. Because of the spell, he was in love with the ugly old woman.

When he heard this, the king was very sad and displeased. He immediately started giving a lot of charity and fell into prostration, crying bitterly before his Lord. Before he could stop crying, a man from the unseen appeared before him and said: "Come with me to the graveyard". The king followed him to the graveyard. He went to a very old grave and dug it up. He showed the king a hair with a hundred knots on it – an

article of witchcraft - on which sorcery had been practiced, and then had been buried. The man blew upon every knot and opened it. As he did this, the young prince became healed of his ailment. As soon as the last knot was opened, the prince was freed from the love for the old woman. His eyes gained proper sight and he no longer detested his wife. He stopped looking at the old woman with eyes filled with love, in fact, he felt great dislike and aversion for her. When he now looked at his young and beautiful wife, he was so struck by her beauty that he fell down unconscious. Slowly, he regained his senses and gradually he was able to bear her beauty.

Lesson

Maulana now gives us lessons from this story: He says: "O people, you are like that prince and this world is like that ugly old woman who has bewitched the lovers of this world. Because of this spell they fall in love with the outside appearance of this temporary life, while turning their backs towards Allah Ta'ala, Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) and towards the life of the Hereafter. In fact, the reality of this world is as much as Hazrat Majzoob (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"Actually it is a picture of devastation although appearing like being built up.
But this is the (true) reality of this world.
That man's eyes are closed and he becomes mere fiction".

Haroun-al-Rashid's son, who discarded his father's kingdom and chose a life of poverty, shortly before his death, spoke to a friend of his, in these words:

يَا صَاحِبِىْ لَا تَغْتَرِرْ بِتَنَعُّمِىْ

فَالْعُمُرُ يَنْفَدُ وَالنَّعِيْمُ يَزُوْلُ

وَاِذَا حَمَلْتَ اِلَى الْقُبُوْرِ جَنَازَةً

فَاعْلَمْ بِاَنَّكَ بَعْدَهَا مَحْمُوْلُ

The world says: O, my friend, do not become deceived by my pleasures,
For life is ending and the pleasures will end.
And when you carry a corpse to the grave,
Then remember that after him you too will be carried".

We learn from this story that the treatment for the person whose eyes have been bewitched by this world is:

1. To have a sincere and deep love for the friends of Allah Ta'ala.
2. To remember death at all times.
3. To stay in the company of the saintly ones as much as possible.
4. To discard one's own opinions and to listen attentively to their instructions and to act accordingly.
5. To perform two-rakaats Salaah, beg forgiveness and beseech Allah Ta'ala for His guidance.

The Story of the Sincerity of Hazrat Ali (Radhiallaho Anho)

There is a very well-known story about the sincerity of Hazrat Ali (Radhiallaho Anho). Once, while fighting with a non-believer, he overpowered him and was sitting on top of him ready to deliver the final blow with his sword. At that moment, the non-believer spat on his face. This act of the disbeliever made Hazrat Ali (Radhiallaho Anho) feel very much displeased. In spite of this, he placed his sword back into its sheath and got off from him. In other words, he immediately refrained from killing him, although he had full opportunity to do so. As he separated himself from the enemy, the disbeliever shouted at him: "O Ameer-ul-Mumineen! What is this? After I insulted you by spitting on your face, you should have killed me immediately. You had me at your mercy and completely subdued and subjugated. What is it that stopped you from

killing me?" Hazrat Ali replied: "I had the intention of killing you solely for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. When you spat in my face, you stirred up my anger. If I had killed you then, this act of mine would have been out of anger of my Nafs and not out of sincerity to Allah Ta'ala. Allah Ta'ala does not accept any deed which is not done out of sincerity. Killing you at that time would have been against sincerity. Hence, I refrained myself".
Hearing these words of Hazrat Ali (Radhiallaho Anho), the enemy was astonished and the light of Imaan was lit in his heart: "I consider it my good fortune to accept such a Deen, O Ameerul-Mumineen, where such a teaching of sincerity is expounded. This Deen is undoubtedly the true Deen".
Now Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"Learn the lesson of sincerity from Hazrat Ali
And consider the Lion of Truth to be free of deceit.

During Jihad, he overpowered a non-believing fighter
And removed his sword from the sheath in order to kill.

The non-believing enemy spat on his face.
Who was the beloved of Allah Ta'ala, Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) and all the Saints.

Hazrat Ali replaced his sword in the sheath
And refrained from killing the enemy.

The non-believer was astonished.
He was surprised at the enemy's pardon and mercy.

He said: "With such speed you took out the sword
But why did you replace the sword in the sheath and let me go?
How is the mercy and pardon at a time of anger when a serpent subdues someone, why would it leave its prey?" Hazrat Ali (Radhiallaho Anho) replied:

"I am the Lion of Allah, not the Lion of my lustful desires. This act of mine, is a witness and an indication of the truth of my religion.
When you spat in my face, my Nafs cried out for revenge.
At that time my nature and disposition was destroyed.

At that time, half the act would be for God and the other half as revenge for myself.
And any deed done for God should not be divided between Him and another
And should be done solely for Him".
The disbelieving enemy replied:
"I am a spreader and sower of injustice and evil,
But I consider you as a highest form of humanity".

The result of this story was that the non-believer was blessed with the light of Islam.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"The sword of clemency is sharper than the sword of iron in effect. In fact, in being victorious, clemency is more effective than numerous armies ".

Lesson

From this story, we learn a very great lesson about sincerity in deeds. Whatever deed a person does, he should do it with the right intention. With sincerity, even worldly acts become religious acts. For example, a person for the sake of earning halaal sustenance shouts: 'Here, buy guavas, buy mangoes!' His intention is to earn halaal sustenance in order to feed his wife and children according to the command of Allah Ta'ala and His Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam). In such a case, for every time he shouts 'Buy guavas, buy mangoes', he is being rewarded. On the other hand, if he says: "Subhaan-Allah, Subhaan-Allah!" with this intention that the people should look upon him as a holy man and put their wealth in his trust, to acquire worldly things, then his "Subhaan-Allah" will be a worldly act and not an act of Deen.

Hence, Ikhlaas (sincerity) is very important. Otherwise, there is the danger that all deeds may be destroyed. In order to learn sincerity, it is necessary that we learn it from a sincere person. This great gift is best acquired from the friends of Allah Ta'ala and from their company. It is not acquired merely from

books. Knowledge derived from books and the company of the saints, both are necessary. Those who are blessed with the company of elders learn a lot and also become beloved of the people. On the other hand, those who depend solely on book knowledge and do not stay in the company of the saintly ones can never become properly reformed. The reason for this is that purification is a transitive action of one on another person and for this act, a purifier is required.

The Quran says, ***"And he purifies them".***

In this verse, the purifier is Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) and the purified are the Sahabah (Radhiallaho Anhum). This shows that the Sahabah (Radhiallaho Anhum) were not able to purify themselves although they lived in the blessed era of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam). At that time, the Quran was being revealed and Hazrat Jibraeel (Alaihis Salaam) was coming and going among them. So how can anybody today say: "Our book knowledge is sufficient for our reformation and rectification"? Deep within, they fully understand that such talk is mere meaningless and foolish pretence. In actual fact, laziness of the self and love of this world and of high rank keep one away from visiting a saintly spiritual guide for self-rectification.

The immediate pleasures and grandeur of this world are preferred above the promised life of the Hereafter. The Nafs reigns supreme and one has not the ability to resist and oppose it. The real reason is a lack of desire in us for attaining Allah Ta'ala and so we are satisfied with a little Deen in our lives, yet we are not satisfied with a little of this world. Night and day, we make plans to acquire more of this worldly wealth. Imam Ghazali (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

اَرَى الْمُلُوْكَ بِاَدْنَى الدِّيْنِ قَدْ قَنَعُوْا

وَمَا اَرَاهُمْ رَضُوْا بِالْعَيْشِ بِالدُّوْنِ

فَاسْتَغْنِ بِالدِّيْنِ عَنْ دُنْيَا الْمُلُوْكِ كَمَا

اسْتَغْنَى الْمُلُوْكُ بِدُنْيَاهُمْ عَنِ الدِّيْنِ

"I see the kings of this world satisfied with little Deen,
But not satisfied with a little of this world
So now, with your Deen, become independent of the king's world,
Just as they with their dunya, show disinterest in the Hereafter".

The Story of the Trader and the Captive Parrot

A trader had a beautiful parrot with a melodious voice. Before the trader went on a journey to India, he asked all his servants: "What shall I bring for you from India?" In this way, he also inquired from the parrot as to what he shall bring for it from India. He asked the parrot what message it wanted delivered to the parrots of India. The parrot replied, "In India when you shall pass any meadow and see any group of parrots, give them my salaams and pass this message onto them:

"A certain parrot longs to meet you but through the decree of Allah Ta'ala, he is a captive in a cage".

The parrot further said,

"After passing my salaams to them, say:

Is this acceptable to you that he should be restless in longing for you

And that he should in this restless state come to the end of his life."

He also said:

"And tell them: 'For how long is it going to be acceptable to you

That he should continue to be imprisoned

While you fly about in the greenery, from tree to tree?

Is this the faithfulness of friends that he should remain a captive?
While you are free to roam among the gardens?
The remembrance of friends by friends is a blessed thing
Especially when between them lies the relationship of Layla and Majnoon."

When the trader passed the message onto the parrots of India, they also gave him their regards. When one of the parrots heard the message, she started shaking. She fell down from the branch of the tree and landed on the ground dead. The trader felt great grief that the parrot had died. He felt that if he did not pass on the message it would have been better. After having seen to his business, he returned from India. He distributed the presents which he had bought for the servants. Then the parrot asked him: "And what message did the parrots of Indian forests gave for me? Whatever you saw or heard, tell me". The trader replied: "I passed your complaints onto your parrot friends who shared in your sorrows. But there was one parrot among them who was greatly affected, so much so that it could not bear it and started trembling and died.

When the parrot heard what happened to the one parrot, he also began trembling and fell down cold". When the trader saw this, he began crying: "Oh, what is this? What has happened?" The trader said: "Alas! O melodious voiced bird, Alas! O my Companion, my Confidant!" Thereafter, when the trader imagined that the parrot had died of sorrow, he took it out of the cage and threw it outside. The parrot flew away and sat on a high branch of a tree. The trader looked up towards it and asked: "Tell me what is this? Explain to me the meaning of this". The parrot replied: "That parrot has through its action made itself dead and taught me a lesson, that my freedom and deliverance can be attained in this manner i.e. pretend to be dead. Then the parrot greeted the trader and said to him, "Farewell".

The parrot said: "O master, I have taken the direction to my home-land. I now leave you. May God free you also from the

chains of your Nafs like me. So that like me you too will fly around in the nearness of God".

The trader said:
"Go in the safety of Allah Ta'ala, go to your home-land. You have taught me the way towards freedom. Is my life inferior to the parrots that I should be a captive in a prison and a slave in the chains of my desires and be deprived of Allah Ta'ala's nearness? Thus, my life should be such that it flies to its true garden, free from bonds."

Lesson

Through this story, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) informs us that the parrot did not gain freedom through long speeches and shouting, nor through any claims of arrogance, but rather through annihilating and sacrificing. Thus, when one wishes to free himself from the cage of his 'Nafs' and Shaytaan, he must learn self-annihilation from one who has annihilated himself for Allah Ta'ala. Surely, one who himself is imprisoned cannot free another prisoner. The friends of Allah Ta'ala have been released from their cages, by choosing their companionship and company, others can also find freedom and relief.

The Romans and the Chinese in Decorating

Once some Chinese informed the king: "We are very well known for our ability to decorate and adorn buildings". Then some Romans said: "We are able to produce more splendid decorations and adornments". Thereupon, the king said: "All right, we shall test your abilities to see who is the best".

"The Romans and the Chinese came before the king,
While the Romans were noted for being more knowledgeable."

Then the Chinese told the king: "Give us a house so that we may decorate it. Let the house be hidden behind a curtain so that these Romans cannot copy or imitate our decorations".

According to these conditions, they started decorating the house in their own excellent manner.
Then the Romans said: "We shall prepare a decorated house of our own, just opposite the spot where the Chinese shall work, so that you may easily ascertain by comparing the two houses, as to whose work is better". The Romans also started working behind a curtain in a secret way. However, they did not make any decorated paintings. They merely started cleaning and polishing the wall of the house until in the end the wall of the house started shining like a mirror. Then came the time of the test. The curtains were removed and the result was that the beautiful paintings and pictures in the house of the Chinese became reflected on the wall of the Romans so that their art appeared more beautiful. The king came along. He saw the decorations made by the Chinese. So beautiful were they that they drove the mind away. Thereafter, the king inspected the Romans' decorations and was astonished at what he saw.
Whatever the king saw on the other side, here appeared more beautiful. So that through the efforts of decorating, the eyes were popping out of their sockets.
Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) compares the work of the Romans to that done by the Saintly ones, who place great emphasis cleansing the heart and through its blessings, without studying books and revision, they become decorated with beautiful characters.

"However, the Saintly ones cleanse and polish their hearts profusely
Whereby greed, stinginess and enmity is removed.

One Saint says:
Our law is to keep the heart like a mirror, clean and free of dust. And our way is this, that to retain malice therein, is a major crime."

Lesson

It has always been the way of our elders to pay much attention to "takhliyah" - to keep the heart free of the love of

anyone other than Allah Ta'ala. Thereafter, it becomes easier to reform and rectify bad characteristics in oneself. Cleansing is placed before the acquisition of good characteristics. Hence, they first inculcate Zikr and by lighting the fire of Divine Love, they burn away all other entities from the heart. Thereafter, it becomes easier to act upon every command of Allah Ta'ala and to discard all sins. This is the easiest and quickest way to success!

The Story of the Repentance of Hazrat Nasooh

There was once a man named Nasooh. Although a man, but his outward form and voice was like that of a woman. In the king's palaces, he was appointed to massage the ladies and daughters of the king and to cleanse them. He always used to dress in woman's clothing and was accepted as a maidservant and worker. Because he was a man possessing all the lustful passions and desires, he used to enjoy massaging and washing the women of the king's household. On numerous occasions, he repented of his actions and lifestyle, but again, his 'self' would coerce him into breaking his Taubah. One day he heard that a certain pious person had arrived, so he went to meet him and requested him to remember him in his prayers. The saintly man made dua'a.

***"The dua'a of the holy man reached above the seven heavens.
And through that Nasooh became successful.
The Lord of Glory and Honor created a means for his salvation"***

It so happened that Nasooh and all the other female servants had to be searched. In the female section of the king's palace, a very precious and costly pearl was lost. The door to the female section of the house was closed and the search began. When the pearl was not found, an announcement was made, "That all the maid servants will be undressed and searched, whether they were young maidens or old". As he

heard this announcement, Nasooh started trembling, as he was in actual fact a man, who for a long time had been acting as a woman, with no one knowing about it. The thought went through his mind:
"Today I am going to be disgraced. The king will surely out of his sense of honor and shame, take revenge upon me. That means he will punish me with death. My crime is a very serious one."

"Out of fear, Nasooh went into privacy.
His face became pale, his lips turned blue from fear.

Nasooh saw death in front of his eyes
And shaking like a leaf, he fell down into prostration.

He said: O Lord, many times have I chosen the wrong path.
Many times did I repent and many times did I break my repentance.
O Lord, do that which is suitable for Your High Status.
For from every hole, snakes are biting me.

If the search for the pearl passes the servants and reaches me,
Then how great will be the calamity that will befall me?

This time conceal my faults, O Allah! I seek forgiveness and repent from every improper act of mine. "

Nasooh was talking to Allah Ta'ala thus and said:

"O, my Lord, in my heart numerous flames of sorrow are burning
And You see the blood of my liver in my supplication to You.
And see the state of destitution and pain in which I pray to You".

Nasooh was busy crying before Allah Ta'ala in this manner when he heard a voice saying to him: "All have been searched. O Nasooh, come forward and undress, that we may search you". As Nasooh heard this announcement he realized, by becoming undressed his secret will be exposed. He was so struck by fear that he fell down unconscious and his soul started flying about in the celestial regions. His soul went near

to Allah Ta'ala while he was unconscious. At that time, the mercy of Allah Ta'ala started over flowing and through the command of Allah Ta'ala, the pearl was found before Nasooh could be searched. This saved Nasooh from any humiliation and disgrace.

Nasooh regained consciousness and his eyes appeared much more enlightened than before. In other words, while he was unconscious, the mercy of Allah Ta'ala caused his soul to experience the nearness of Allah Ta'ala and the light shining in his eyes was from that experience. The ladies of the king's household came to him and apologized to him and in soft terms begged his pardon for having had suspicions about him. They said: "Pardon our suspicions. We are sorry for having caused you so much trouble. We had a wrong suspicion about you and have in our conversation backbitten you. Pardon us". Nasooh replied:

"This is the grace of God upon me, O my benefactors.
Whatever was said about me, I am worse than that".

Thereafter, one of the king's daughters asked him to bath her. Nasooh had repented and promised to lead a life of righteousness. While unconscious, his soul had gained great nearness to Allah Ta'ala. How could he, after such contact with Allah Ta'ala, and after attaining such conviction in Allah Ta'ala, return to the darkness of sin? He realized that darkness after light was deplorable. He told the king's daughter:

"O daughter, now the strength of my hand has gone,
And I have become indisposed."

In this manner, he saved himself from further sin.
Thereafter he said to himself:

"My crime and fault has crossed beyond the limit.
How can the fear and sorrow ever leave my heart?
I have made true repentance to my Lord, which I will never break
Even though my life should separate from my body".

Lesson

From this story, the following points of advice are extracted:

1. One should never lose hope over his evil deeds. The Mercy of Allah Ta'ala is powerful enough to bring about rectification in all cases.

2. One should also seek the dua' as of the saintly ones, just as Nasooh did. He was successful in his request.

3. In this story there is a great lesson in how at the time of extreme emergency, Nasooh turned to Allah Ta'ala and how he cried lament fully before Allah Ta'ala in dire circumstances.

4. We also see how Nasooh spent a large part of his life in sin. This was a very dangerous situation but Allah Ta'ala in His Mercy, arranged a way out for him by giving him the ability to make true and sincere Taubah.

Then the rank of his Taubah, which appears in the last couplet, contains a great lesson for repenters. Nasooh promised that even if it should mean his death, he will not break his Taubah. Subhaan-Allah! What a great promise from Allah Ta'ala's sincere servant, that even if life should be removed from his body, yet he will not in future break his Taubah. This is something which points to great rank, great courage and great ambition. May Allah Ta'ala grant us all such Taubah and may He guide us to that which He loves and to what pleases Him.

The Story of the Debate of Hazrat Ali with a Rejecter

Once an irreligious one, a rejecter of faith in Allah Ta'ala started a debate with Hazrat Ali who was sitting on the top storey of a house. The rejecter, a Jew, said to him from below: "O Ali Murtaza, have you got faith in Allah Ta'ala as your Protector?"

Hazrat Ali replied, "Yes, definitely. He is our Protector". The Jew said, "O Murtaza, throw yourself down from the top storey

and depend on Allah Ta'ala as Protector to save you from harm, so that your strong faith may be a means towards my faith and a means of my sincere belief". Hazrat Ali replied, "Since when has a slave the right to put his Lord to the test? And since when has a slave the courage, O Foolish One, to test his Lord? This is a right due to Allah Ta'ala alone that at all times, He can test His servants. If an atom on the side of a mountain, looking at the height of the mountain says: 'I shall weigh you'. Such atom should think that if it places the mountain on a scale, the scale itself will split. In this manner foolish ones having pride, in their foolish notions try to weigh the friends of Allah Ta'ala on their scale. When the high rank of the saints cannot be contained in the scales of these fools, then because of their behavior, Allah Ta'ala destroys those scales and makes them involved with further foolishness". It is a point of experience that those people who act insultingly to these friends of Allah Ta'ala and object against them, their rational powers become deficient day by day and their practical acts begins to decrease. May Allah Ta'ala protect us all.
Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says,

"When such thoughts and whisperings enter the heart, one should consider it as a sign of ill-fortune and a sign of destruction. In such a case, the following line of action should be adopted:

"Immediately fall into prostration and begin crying lament fully and seek refuge in Allah Ta'ala: O Allah Ta'ala, save me from such thoughts".

Lesson

If after Taubah and crying before Allah Ta'ala, these thoughts still do not leave the mind, consider such whisperings to be from Shaytaan. It is necessary to consider them as evil. Deliberately do not pay attention to these thoughts. Within a short while, Insha-Allah Ta'ala, these thoughts will disappear. However, you should always make dua'a, implore Allah Ta'ala, and ask the saintly ones to pray on your behalf.

The Story of the Conversation between Hazrat Mu'awiya (Radhiallaho Anho) and Iblees

One night, Hazrat Mu'awiya was resting at home fast asleep. Suddenly someone woke him up for prayers. He looked around to find the person who awoke him, but there was no one awake. In surprise, he said, "No one can enter my house at this time. I wonder who could have been so brave". Then, suddenly a person appeared at the door with his face hidden. He asked him, "Who are you?" The person replied: "I am known by the notorious name of Iblees, the one of ill-fortune". Hazrat Mu'awiya asked: "O Iblees, tell me, why did you wake me up? Tell me the whole truth". He replied, "The time for salaah is running out, and is almost over. You should hurry towards the mosque".

Hazrat Mu'awiya said, "That can never be your object. Since when do you guide towards righteousness? You enter my house like a thief and then you come and tell me that you are a watchman over me. How can that be, especially from one who is a well-known highway robber. Why would you have so much sympathy for me?" Thereupon Iblees replied, "Previously I was an angel (in my actions) and gave my life in the path of obedience. Can a previous profession be removed from the heart? Can previous love be removed from the heart? I point out for righteous ones the path of righteousness and welcome evil ones towards the path of evil. If I awakened you for the sake of Deen, then know that that is my original nature".

Hazrat Mu'awiya (Radhiallaho Anho) said: "O thief, do not dispute with me! You will not be able to find a way to mislead. So, do not search for a way to lead me onto the path of evil. Tell me the truth! Why did you wake me for Salaah? You are an inviter towards evil and your job is to misguide people. What is the purpose of your calling towards good?" Iblees replied, "Sire, the truth of the matter is this. If you had missed your Salaah, you would have felt tremendous remorse and

sorrow over it and through it, Allah Ta'ala would have raised your status. This would have caused me great envy and jealousy. Therefore, I thought it would be better for me to wake you up for Salaah. If you had missed your Salaah, you would, with great pain in your heart, have sighed in sorrow. Moreover, your sorrow, crying, grief and sadness would have brought you even more closer to Allah Ta'ala than two hundred rak'aats of Nafal prayers. For this reason, fearing your attaining such nearness to Allah Ta'ala, I decided to wake you.

"I woke you up due to this fear
So that your sighing in sorrow and grief will not burn me.
I am jealous of man and this I did through that jealousy
And I am man's enemy and my work is enmity and malice",

Then Hazrat Mu'awiya (Radhiallaho Anho) said, "Now you have spoken the truth and the jealousy and enmity you have shown are befitting you"

Lesson

This story teaches us how much sorrow Shaytaan feels when a person shows grief and sorrow after committing sins and faults. It also shows how much Allah Ta'ala's Mercy is directed to His servants. May Allah Ta'ala grant us the ability to cry to Him out of grief and sorrow over our sins. Ameen.

The Story of the Grammarian and the Sailor

In the Mathnawi, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) tells the story of a grammarian. A certain man noted for his knowledge of grammar once boarded a boat for a voyage. The captain of the boat asked him, "Sir, in which subject are you an expert?" He replied, "I am an expert in the knowledge of grammar. It is a great pity that you have spent your whole life learning to sail a boat but did not learn anything about grammar". At this reply, the boatman remained silent. It so happened that according to the decree of Allah Ta'ala, the boat was caught up in a storm in the middle of the ocean. The captain told the grammarian: "Sir, make use of your knowledge

of grammar and save yourself from drowning. The boat is in danger of sinking".

The grammarian remained silent. Of what use was grammar in such a situation? The sailor also said, "This is not a time for grammar. It is time to be a swimmer. There is, at this time, no use of expert knowledge of grammar. It is time to swim your way out of trouble.

"The water of the ocean carries a corpse on its head while living ones it drowns"

In other words, by annihilating your 'self' the road to Allah Ta'ala is discovered. Those who act proudly and arrogantly are destroyed.

Hence, in the path of Allah Ta'ala, self-annihilation is most useful. It is of no great benefit to become involved with arguments and debates. Sometimes these debates create arrogance, which prevents one from building a close contact with the saintly ones. May Allah Ta'ala protect us against such deprivation and grant us perfect annihilation of the self, Ameen!

I, once, asked my Shaikh and Murshid, "What is annihilation?" He replied, "The meaning of the term 'destruction of the self', and to 'annihilate yourself' and to become 'annihilated to Allah Ta'ala' means that a person will discard all his pleasures and desires which are against the commands of Allah Ta'ala, that is called 'annihilation of the self'. When a person initially takes the first steps on the path of sulook, this annihilation is accomplished through strenuous spiritual exercises and great difficulty. But in the end, the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and the acquisition thereof becomes like second nature to a person - much easier to attain."

The Rejection by a Philosopher

A certain Qari recited a verse from the Holy Quran:

إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَآؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا

"If the water of your fountain should disappear deep into the ground who has the power to bring it up?"

Allah Ta'ala informs us that He alone has the power to bring back that water after it has sunk underground.

***"I cause water to become hidden in the depths of the earth.
And cause fountains to dry up, causing water scarcity.
Who else, except Me, can bring back water to the fountains?"***

One hearing the recitation of this verse, a philosopher and logican said, "I am able to bring back the water". That night he saw in a dream a strong man give him a heavy blow in his eyes, as a result of which both eyes were struck with blindness. In the dream, the man challenged him, "O wretched one, bring back the light into the fountains of your eyes if you are truthful in your claim ". When he awoke from his dream, he found that he was blind in both eyes.

***"If this man sought Allah Ta'ala's pardon and cried before Him,
Then Allah Ta'ala's Mercy would have returned the light to his eyes. However, the ability to seek pardon and repent does not lie in his hands and the taste of repentance is not food for every drunken one".***

Lesson

From this story, we learn the following lessons:

1. Having doubts in the words of Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul can be the cause of worldly punishment, in addition to the punishment in the Hereafter. This is something that one should greatly fear.

2. One should never commit sins on the premise that afterwards I will repent, because the ability to repent does not lie in our hands. It is possible that because of our boldness and audacity and our insulting attitude, the ability and guidance towards repentance may be snatched away from us. That could mean that without

repentance for sins committed, one can become and remain rejected.

The example of Taubah (repentance) is like a person saying, "This ointment is very beneficial and good for burns." Relying on this ointment, will a person place his hand in the fire? No! The ointment is to be used for accidents, not that one should purposely burn his hand in fire and then test the ointment. Similarly, for sins and their darkness and the fire which causes damage to the heart, distances one from Allah Ta'ala and causes His displeasure, Taubah makes amends. Taubah is the ointment and antidote for the wounds caused by the fire of sins. But to say that I am purposely going to commit sin, is just like putting your hand in the fire to test the beneficial nature of the ointment. This is foolish indeed. One should avoid all sins, even at the cost of his life. To retain this resolute intention, one should make contact with the friends of Allah Ta'ala, choose a good environment and inculcate within oneself the habit of performing Zikr profusely. If in spite of all these efforts to avoid sin, due to human weakness, a sin does occur, then in such a case crying in grief and sorrow and repentance are two very beneficial ointments.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says in one place,

"The vehicle of repentance is a wonderful means of conveyance. Within a moment, it moves us from the lowliness of sin and takes us for a tour of the heavens."

He who repents to Allah Ta'ala becomes His beloved.

The Story of Hakeem Jalinoos

Once Hakeem Jalinoos requested some of his friends to bring a certain medicine from the chemist. The friends told him, "That is a medicine which is given to mad people to drink. What is wrong with you that you now ask for medicine for madness?" Jalinoos replied, "A mad person stared at me. For a whole hour that mad person looked at me and was very pleased. Then he winked his eyes and tore his sleeve to pieces. If I was not of his nature and temperament and if I had

no madness in me, then why would this ugly one continue to stare at me? When does a bird fly except with other birds of the same feather? The company of a contrasting kind, is like a live one in a grave".

Jalinoos said that when a specific attribute becomes a common factor in two different people, then it becomes a cause for mutual friendship and compatibility. The friends were quite surprised at this knowledge. They, then, tried to find out what was the common attribute between Jalinoos and the mad man. When the friends went close to the mad man, they were astonished to note that he too walked with a limp, like Jalinoos. In other words, this was the common attribute, which caused the compatibility between them.

Lesson

If a person meets a bad person and gets pleased or, a bad person who does not intend to give up his evil habits, meets him and becomes pleased, then know that some evil in both is the common factor, which has created this pleasure. Experience has shown that if a person is considered pious because of his outward appearance however, his association and company and friendship is all the time with the evil doers and materially inclined, then in reality he too is a worldly one and materially inclined, although his outward appearance is that of piety. If he is meeting the evil doers in order that he may invite them towards righteousness then that is an exception.

The Hadith "Every person is on the Deen (way of Life) of his close friend" also supports this. So if you wish to know about a person's character, then look to his circle of friends. It is also proven that a person greedy for wealth but unable to acquire it, listens greedily to stories of the rich and their wealth. On the other hand, a person desirous of the deeds that gain one eternal happiness, but unable to achieve them due to weakness, still listens greedily to stories of people who achieved spiritual perfection and proximity to Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam).

The Story of Rasulullah's (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) Visit to the Sick

A companion of the Holy Prophet (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) fell ill and became very weak. Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) went to visit him. He was so ill that it appeared as if he had reached the end of his life. When Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) saw his condition, he expressed great sympathy. When the sick Sahabi saw Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam), he was overjoyed. It appeared as if he was endowed with new life. It was as if a dead person sprung back to life. He said, "This sickness has made me a very fortunate person that it became the cause of the king of believers coming to visit me." He also said, "O my sickness, my fever, my sorrow, my pain and sleeplessness by night, blessed be you all. You are the cause of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) coming to visit me today".

Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) asked the sick man, "Do you remember any special dua'a you made during the time of your good health?" He replied, "O Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam), I cannot remember what dua'a I made." Then after a short while through the blessings of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam), he remembered and said: "Ya Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) I now remember the dua'a. It was this, "O Allah Ta'ala! In view of my shortcomings, in my deeds and in view of my faults, I beseech Thee, grant me the punishment in this world, which You would give in the Hereafter. So that I may be exempted from punishment in the Hereafter. This dua'a, I kept making up till this day. Until the time came that a heavy sickness covered me and I found myself in distress because of the illness. Due to this sickness, I am unable to perform my Zikr and Wazifas as I did in my healthy days. And now I am unaware of my relatives and good or evil ones."

Hearing this dua'a, Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) showed some displeasure and prohibited him from making such a dua'a: "In the future, do not make such a dua'a".

Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) declared such a dua'a does not befit a servant of Allah Ta'ala. He declared it to be against serfdom to Allah Ta'ala. To beg Allah Ta'ala to send down punishment is tantamount to making the claim that you have the power to withstand it. Therefore, Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) advised him: "O You, what strength do you possess that on a sick ant like yourself Allah Ta'ala should place a big mountain of calamity? But pray: O Allah Ta'ala, ease for me my difficulty." So that He may change the thorns of your distress to a garden of comfort.

Grant to us the good of this worldly life, and grant to us the good of the life of the Hereafter".

Lesson

This story teaches us never to pray to Allah Ta'ala for calamities. We should at all times pray for our welfare and well-being in both the worlds, while admitting before Him our weakness and our inability. For example, if a person has the illness of looking at women, he should pray for rectification and should endeavor to treat the malady by consulting the saintly ones and asking them to pray for him. He should never become distressed and say, "O Allah Ta'ala, this malady of mine is not good. It would be better if you make me completely blind, so that I am not plagued by the sins of my eyes". Such a dua'a will be foolishness. As far as possible, one should pray for health, safety, protection from calamities and welfare.

I heard my Shaikh Hazrat Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe) say that Hazrat Mansoor (Rahmatullah Alaihe) used to perform Nafl Salaah in the sun while there was a place to do so in the shade. A saintly elder endowed with 'nisbat' (close connection with Allah Ta'ala) said: "This man will soon face a great calamity". This means that when there is ease in front of you, then do not prefer difficulty. When you have to choose between calamity on the one side and calamity on the other side, then choose the lighter of the two as is mentioned in the Hadith.

The Story of the Royal Falcon

Once a king's falcon flew away from his palace and landed in the house of an old woman of the neighborhood. The old woman saw the falcon's long nails and its big wings and cut them short, saying, "With which unworthy person have you lived all this time who kept you like an orphan." Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says, "So is the love of an ignorant person. For a falcon, long nails and huge wings are its virtues and required in its hunting pursuits. These signs of perfection in the falcon were looked upon as faults by the old woman, due to her ignorance of what constitutes perfection for a falcon. By cutting the nails and wings, she made the falcon useless.

The king, in the meantime, searched for the falcon. One day while searching, he came to the house of the old woman. Seeing the falcon in this state, he began weeping. The falcon saw him and said, "O king, I am very much ashamed of myself. I repent and now make a new promise and commitment to you".

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) now says:

"The world is like that old woman
That whoever inclines to it is just as disgraced and foolish.
He who befriends an ignorant one, will meet the same fate
As the falcon met at the hands of the ignorant old woman".

Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) said, "Similarly, some ignorant ones become claimants to being servants of Islam. Then in their ignorance, make Islam subject to their absurd opinions and thereby distort the true teachings of Islam. This is generally true of those people who through their own study later become authors of books and articles on Islam, without having studied Deen at the hands of a scholarly teacher. When looking at the writings of these authors, great precaution is required. There is a Hadith in Tirmidhi that Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) said:

أُنْظُرُوْا عَمَّنْ تَأْخُذُوْا دِيْنَكُمْ وَالْاِسْنَادُ مِنَ الدِّيْنِ

"See from whom you take your Deen and the correct transmission chain is part of the Deen".

In other words, before acquiring Deen from anyone, first enquire from a well-known scholar about his credibility. The jug from which you drink water should first be inspected to see that the water inside is clean and not contaminated.

The Story of the Falcon and the Owls

Once a king's falcon flew away from the palace and landed in some ruins inhabited by owls. As soon as they saw him coming in their midst, the owls started protesting and objecting against his arrival, saying:

"This falcon wants to take over our ruins for himself".

The falcon hearing this accusation was bewildered and perplexed and said to them:

"I shall not tarry here among you but shall return to the king.
You may keep your ruins to yourself
My place is with the king and near the crown".

The owls replied:

"This falcon is busy with a deceitful plan. He wants to oust us from these ruins and claim them for himself.
And he wants to take possession of our homes and with his flattering and clever plans, intends to destroy our nests".

The falcon got the impression that the owls were going to attack him and thus warned them:

"***If through your mischief one of my wings should break***
The king who cherishes me, will attack and destroy your whole neighborhood.

The king's bounty and kindness protects me
And wherever I go, his protective glance is over me.

I am in the thoughts of the king at all times,
And without me, his heart becomes sad.

I am a Royal falcon and for that all envy me.
How can stupid owls understand my position?"

Lesson

There are times when the friends of Allah Ta'ala, who are like the royal falcons and the beloved of Allah Ta'ala, are looked at by the stupid, worldly ones, in the same manner as the owls. Similarly, we find those who trouble them because of their wrong reasoning and conceptions. Allah Ta'ala, however, protects them. They are never for one moment out of the sight of the Master, no matter where they go. As Allah Ta'ala says to the Rasul (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam)

"For verily you are within Our sight".

In other words, "O Muhammad, these non-believers cannot destroy you for you are at all times in Our sight and under Our protection."

The Story of a Peacock and the Hakeem

Once a peacock was busy pulling out its beautiful feathers and throwing them away. A Hakeem happened to pass. Upon seeing, he enquried, "O Peacock, why are you pulling out such beautiful feathers? What ingratitude is this?" The peacock replied: "Don't you see that numerous calamities come to me from all sides, due to these wings and feathers. Unjust hunters place traps in all places just to get hold of these feathers and wings. When by day I am unable to keep myself safe and protected against those calamities and trials, it is better that I remove these feathers and make my appearance unsightly. So as to make myself without worries in the mountains and meadows. It is my opinion that it is more important for me to save my life than my outer form for if the life is safe, what harm is there if the form is unseemly?"

Lesson

This is the reason why the saintly ones keep themselves away from fame and pomp as Maulana explains in another couplet:

"Keep yourself unknown and without name or fame and be like an indigent one.
For fame takes away all bounds of comfort and brings many calamities in its wake".

However, when Allah Ta'ala himself makes a saintly one famous, then His protection is like a shade over him. Fame is bad when one desires it and strives for it. Haji Imdadullah (Rahmatullah Alaihe) used to say:

"I am sitting here without name and without any sign.
Who is it that has spread my fame about?"

By annihilating themselves and leading simple lives, our elders found peace and comfort. I heard from my Shaikh, Hazrat Phulpuri (Rahmatullah Alaihe), that Maulana Qasim Nanotwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), the founder of Darul Uloom, Deoband was going somewhere dressed in a lungi and a very simple 'kurta' (long shirt). A man who saw him dressed so simply considered him a yarn spinner. He asked him, "What is the price of cotton thread in the market today?" Maulana replied, "I did not go to the market today". He did not say, "Do you consider me a yarn spinner?" because that would have seemed as if there is some insulting reference to the spinners. After all, with Allah Ta'ala the only criterion for honor and respect is "taqwa (piety)."

The Story of Hazrat Anas Bin Maalik (Radhiallaho Anho)

Once some guests came to visit Hazrat Anas Bin Maalik (Radhiallaho Anho) . He entertained them with a meal. The tablecloth became dirty and discolored, due to some curry having fallen upon it. Hazrat Anas instructed the

maidservant to cast it into the burning furnace. The servant did as she was commanded. The guests were astonished at this command. When the tablecloth was thrown into the burning furnace, they awaited the appearance of smoke to indicate that the tablecloth was burning. But, instead when the tablecloth was removed from the fire, it was not only intact but also clean. They questioned: "O Companion of Rasul, why did this tablecloth not burn in the fire? And instead of burning, has become perfectly clean. Hazrat Anas (Radhiallaho Anho) replied: "The reason is that on numerous occasions, Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) cleansed his hands and lips with this cloth".

Now, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says: "O you who have become frightened of the fire and punishment of Jahannam, it is most advisable that you draw near to such blessed hands and lips, by following the Sunnah. When a lifeless material has been granted such honor by the lips of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam), you can imagine what honor he must have granted to His true Lovers"

Lesson

When a tablecloth was granted such honor by simply wiping of his blessed hands, one can just imagine what honor and nearness to Allah Ta'ala will be granted in both the worlds to those who follow the Sunnah diligently, the way to Divine proximity. May Allah Ta'ala grant us all the ability to follow the Sunnah and make us anxious to attain that great bounty from Him. Ameen!

The Story of a Thief during the Time of Hazrat Umar (Radhiallaho Anho)

Once, during the reign of Hazrat Umar (Radhiallaho Anho), a thief was caught, found guilty and handed over for punishment. He complained bitterly and pleaded: "O Ameerul Mumineen, this is my first crime. Please pardon my fault". Hazrat Umar replied:"Allah Ta'ala forbid!

Allah Ta'ala does not send down His revenge and punishment at the commission of crime for the first crime. At most times by way of expressing His bounty He covers up the faults of servants, but when they continue sinning, then by way of justice, He seizes them and causes them disgrace. So that both Allah Ta'ala's attributes become exhibited as Giver of good news and as Warner of His punishment".

Lesson

In this story, there is a great lesson for those intending to follow the path of the Sulook. There are those involved with looking at evil and similar sins for a long time and neglect to rectify and change their condition, yet they are noted to be Sufis or pious among men. For them to be at ease and be satisfied that Allah Ta'ala has concealed their sins and thus make themselves a target of Allah Ta'ala's attribute of vengeance and punishing for sins, is a very foolish attitude. Allah Ta'ala's exhibition of this graceful nature, grants us the opportunity of rectification and sincere repentance. If we are not taking benefit from this opportunity, then His attribute of Justice will cease us by calamities and we will be disgrace.

Hence, at all times, we should remain fearful of Allah Ta'ala exhibiting His other attributes. We should, thus, remain busy with seeking forgiveness and crying lamentfully before Him; all the while, endeavoring to give up sinful activities. At the same time, we should also continue to consult our spiritual guide to whom we entrust our rectification. In the presence of continuous sin, performance of much Zikr and recitation of 'Wazeefas' is not of full benefit. The novice treading the Sufi path in such a way will always be incomplete in his endeavors and remain far from his objective of acquiring nearness to Allah Ta'ala.

The path of sin on the one side and proximity to Allah Ta'ala are two opposite and contrasting objectives. The main pre-condition for sainthood is 'taqwa' - fear of Allah Ta'ala and care of one's duties to Him and His creation. The main pre-

condition for sainthood is not making abundance of Zikr and the recitation of Wazeefas. However, it must be stressed that recitation of Zikr etc. provides great help in attaining 'taqwa'. May Allah Ta'ala grant us all the ability to acquire within ourselves taqwa (fear for Him) and the ability to avoid all sins and also the ability to treat our sickness of sins. And May He grant us the opportunity to turn to some saint of His with the intention of acquiring all these things, Ameen!

The Story of Hazrat Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) Visiting the Sick

Once Allah Ta'ala sent revelation to Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam), "O Moosa, you did not come to visit Me during My illness". Hazrat Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) replied: "Ya Allah Ta'ala, You are free of all shortcomings and free of illness. Glory be to You! What is the inner meaning of this statement of Thy? Please explain". A voice from the Unseen replied, "O Moosa, a devotee of Mine who is also My chosen one, has fallen ill. Go and look at him with a caring eye. The illness of him who is close to Me, is like My sickness and that man's helplessness is like My helplessness. Your visiting Me in his sickness is for your own benefit and its benefit, reward, nearness and the fruits of his dua'as will all return to you, on returning from him.

Even if the sick one be an enemy, visiting him is better,
For through benevolence, very often an enemy also becomes a friend.

And even if he does not become a friend, at least there will be a lessening of enmity and malice,
Because doing good to some is an ointment against the wound of malice.

Apart from these, there are many other benefits of benevolence.
But I fear extending this topic, O My righteous friend".

Lessons

We see here how great Allah Ta'ala's contact is with His special servants. He considers their sickness as His own sickness. This shows their state of belovedness. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) referred to this relationship in another place, where he says:

"Whosoever desires to be a companion of Allah Ta'ala should sit in the gatherings of the saintly ones,
And should consider their love and service to them to be love and service to Allah Ta'ala ".

Secondly, even if an enemy is sick he should be visited. The visit will make him a friend. If he is not going to become a friend, then at least his enmity will decrease.

NOTE:

However, when severing of relationship is required for the sake of Allah Ta'ala, then one should not visit such a person until a clear announcement of repentance has been made. Until such time one should remain far away from him. This ruling should be discussed with a pious, God-fearing Scholar.

The Story of the Tree Of Life

A wise man once told a person, just to test him that in India there is a tree, that whoever eats of its fruits, never dies. When the king heard of this, he fell in love with it. He immediately sent a messenger to India to search for the tree. The messenger wandered from place to place in search of the tree. He wandered about in quite a distressed state, but nowhere did he find such a tree. Whenever he enquired from people, they would tell him: "Only mad people look for such a tree". They used to jeer and scoff at him. At last when he had become tired of roaming around like that in a foreign country and exhausted by the difficulties of travel, he decided to return home. He was very disappointed. On his return, he met a "Qutub Shaikh" along the way.

He said to the Shaikh:
"O Shaikh, this is a time for mercy and benevolence.
I have become helpless and disappointed in my quest.
This is a time for your kindness".
The Shaikh replied:
"What is your disappointment and what is the nature of your quest?" He replied: "My king has given me this job to search for such a tree in India that whosoever eats of its fruits will live forever. I have wandered around in India for years and searched everywhere but I have not found any sign of it. People jeer at me and consider me a mad one". The Shaikh listened to him, laughed and said:

"O Saleem, this tree is only the bounty of knowledge. Through knowledge, a person finds everlasting life and one without knowledge is dead. You have searched for the outer form of knowledge and therefore lost the way. You have been deprived of the form of knowledge too, because you failed to understand the inner meaning".

Lesson

The wise man who originally told the story about the tree in India actually compared knowledge to a tree. His aim was to test the listener. Knowledge is an abstract concept and such abstract concepts do not stand by themselves alone. For their existence, they require an agent or a place on which to exist. Thus, knowledge can only be acquired from the Ulama. The Ulama are the tree. By knowledge is meant only that knowledge which causes one to reach Allah Ta'ala. The knowledge which is a means of livelihood and leads to employment in industry and trade, is called industrial knowledge and trade knowledge. True knowledge is only the knowledge of Deen, through which a person tries to please his Master and thereby acquires a life of honor in both the worlds. Without this knowledge a person is a corpse, even if he is alive. For this reason, the wise man compared knowledge to the water of life. Without this knowledge, recognition of Allah Ta'ala (Ma'rifat) is impossible.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us true knowledge and grant us the ability to practice upon it. Ameen.

The Story of Hazrat Izraeel (Alaihis Salaam) Staring At A Person

A simple man once came to Hazrat Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam). His face was pale and he was quite struck by fear and anxiety. Hazrat Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) asked him: "Why are you so struck with fear?" He replied: "Hazrat Izraeel (Alaihis Salaam) stared at me with very angry eyes. For this reason, I am quite worried and distressed". Then Hazrat Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) asked: "What do you want?" He replied: "Send me from here to India". Hazrat Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) commanded the wind to transport him to any place in India where he wanted to go.

The following day, Hazrat Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) met Hazrat Izraeel (Alaihis Salaam) and enquired: "Why did you stare at a certain Muslim in such a manner that he became so distressed and worried? Was it your intention to take his soul away in a land where he has no heirs?" Hazrat Izraeel (Alaihis Salaam) replied: "I stared at him in astonishment because I had been commanded to take out his soul in India. Allah Ta'ala ordered me to take his soul this very day in India. However, when I saw him here I was astonished and confused. When through the order of Allah Ta'ala I reached India, I found him there and there I took out his soul.

O You listener, compare all the world's affairs in the light of this
And open your eyes to witness it.

Who are we fleeing from? From Allah Ta'ala? This is impossible.
Against who are we rebelling? Against Allah Ta'ala? This is pure disaster, disaster, disaster.

Lesson

We should keep our affairs with Allah Ta'ala clear and safe. We should at all times try our utmost to fulfill our duties to Allah Ta'ala and the rights of mankind, because we do not know when and where we shall have to say farewell to the life of this world, and appear before Allah Ta'ala for reckoning.

رہ کے دنیا میں بشر کو نہیں زیبا غفلت
موت کا دھیان بھی لازم ہے کہ ہر آن رہے
جو بشر آتا ہے دنیا میں یہ کہتی ہے قضا
میں بھی پیچھے چلی آتی ہوں ذرا دھیان رہے

It does not befit man to remain negligent in this world.
He shall have to remember death at all times.

To every man who comes into this world.
Death says: "I follow behind, do remember".

The Story of the Plan of the Thirsty One

A very thirsty person was sitting on the bank of a river but a high wall prevented him from reaching the water. Being very thirsty, very impatient and restless to get to the water, he climbed the wall. He then removed one-by-one brick out of the wall and threw it into the water. The splashing sound the brick made as it hit the water pleased him very much and consoled him. Therefore, he continued breaking one-by-one the bricks from the wall and throwing them into the water. The water questioned him: "Why do you strike me with the bricks? What benefit is there in it for you?" The man replied:

"There are two benefits for me. The first benefit is that the splashing sound of the water to the ear of a thirsty one, is sweet music. Secondly, as the bricks are lessened the wall is

lowered and the water is becoming nearer. The removal of the wall will become a means of reaching the water"

Lesson

It is reported that Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) once asked Allah Ta'ala: "What is the way of reaching unto You?" The reply came, "Discard your "Nafs"(self) and come to Me."

In the above story, there is a lesson for the seekers of Allah Ta'ala. They are thirsty for Allah Ta'ala while the wall of the Nafs (self) prevents them from meeting Him. Beyond this high wall of Nafs, lies the great ocean of nearness to Allah Ta'ala. Hence, the one who starts annihilating his 'self', by discarding every desire that is contrary to Allah Ta'ala's wishes -those desires which are like bricks of separation, will obtain two great benefits.

Firstly, he will feel the closeness of the ocean of Allah Ta'ala's love and perceive it as being within reach.

Secondly, as the preventative wall of his desires is lowered, the seeker of Allah Ta'ala will come closer to his objective, until perfect nearness is attained the day he annihilates his 'self' completely. Annihilation means to make all one's desires subject to the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. The day this rank is reached through spiritual exercises and through a saintly spiritual guide, one will attain the good life. A glimpse of it can be felt from Khawaja Majzoob's words:

میں رہتا ہوں جنت میں دن رات گویا

مرے باغ دل میں وہ گلکاریاں ہیں

It is as if I am living in paradise day and night.
The garden of my heart is in full blossom.

Each moment, it is as if there is a flood of light upon my heart and at all times the thought of my beloved reigns. At no moment does the remembrance of the Beloved leave me. My 'self' is drunk with the melody of Him: "I am Near".

This Majzoob whom all consider to be in a wretched state
What do they know of the pleasurable state of this fortunate one?

Now another condition has taken hold over me day and night,
At all times I am in a state of blessed communion with Him.

Now in my heart there is continuously a remembrance of Him night and day,
Even in separation I am in communication with Him".

The Story of Promising To Do Something Tomorrow

Once a man planted a thorn-tree in a well-trodden path. As it grew bigger and stronger, the thorns started injuring those passing by. The people blamed the planter, but it had no effect on him. So, every time he would promise to remove the tree from the path, the next day. However, nothing was done about the tree. At last, the matter reached the governor who also ordered him to uproot the tree. The planter promised the governor that he would do so the following day, but again he failed to carry out his promise. The result was that the tree grew until it became very strong and sturdy, with its roots going deep in the ground. Now he was unable to uproot the thorn-tree at all.

"The bad tree grew into a strong young tree
While the planter became old and weak.

The thorny tree was everyday becoming healthier
And the uprooter was becoming weaker daily.

O Listener, very often you have become grief-stricken over your evil deeds
And very often your evil deeds brought you regret and the desire to repent.

So often you have become helpless at the hands of your evil deeds and devastated,

Have you become senseless? You have become 'senseless to an overwhelming degree.

O you senseless one, arise and rectify your previous bad habits: rise, take up an axe and attack like a man
Like Hazrat Ali who uprooted the gate of Khaybar".

Lesson

In this story, Maulana gives the advise that a seeker of truth and seeker of Allah Ta'ala should never postpone for tomorrow the rectification of evil deeds and habits. Never should they say: "I will rectify and change my habits tomorrow" and when tomorrow comes along, then again say the same. In this way, Shaytaan causes that promise, of tomorrow to continue, until the time of death arrives. Then the intender will enter the grave without rectification and thus disappointed. Shaytaan will rejoice.

Just as the thorny tree, in the end could not be uprooted by the planter, similarly, the longer a person takes to discard or rectify bad habits the more difficult it becomes to uproot them . As the days and nights pass, you will become older and weaker which will make discarding and rectifying of evil habits very difficult. So, rise up without any delay and procrastination. Grab an axe of courage and uproot the doors of evil, just like Hazrat Ali uprooted the gate of Khaybar and threw it away. And just as Hazrat Ali was granted great help being in the company of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam), you also will acquire great help by joining forces with the saints of Allah Ta'ala, the friends of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam). Hazrat Maulana Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"Even these days no position of Wilayat (sainthood) is open and Unoccupied. Whether it is the rank of Qutub, Ghous or Abdaal. All these ranks even today are filled".

These saints, whom you look at as being wretched and worthless, after a hundred years, they will be looked upon as the Junaid, Rumi, Attaar and Shibly of this age. It is foolish to argue like this: "Where do you find saintly men today like those

in the past?" This is a Shaytaani deception which deprives us of the blessings of these men. Do we find anyone complaining today that for physical ailments: "Where do we find a Jalinoos or a Socrates or a Plato? No, we go to the present day doctors for treatment." Similarly, for the treatment and rectification of spiritual or internal illnesses, we should contact the present day followers of the Sunnah who have been granted permission by their elders to initiate others into an oath of allegiance (Bay' at). We should consult them and begin our self-rectification. Furthermore, we should not needlessly delay until the oath of 'Bay'at' because Bay'at is Sunnah Ghair Muakkada, while rectification of the self is obligatory. However, after starting the process of rectification, if one finds himself agreeable to it, he should also enter into 'Bay'at'. It is a Sunnah by which a special connection is formed which increases the benefit.

The Story of a Mouse Leading a Camel

Once a mouse took hold of the reins of a camel and tried to lead him. The camel seeing the foolishness of the mouse became submissive and relaxed. Wherever the mouse led him, the camel followed meekly, like a slave obedient to his master. They went along until they came to a river where the mouse lost its presence of mind and came to a standstill. He started thinking that up to that moment he had led an animal of great size and up to now had enjoyed the honor of having made the camel submissive to him. But, now that they had come to the river, how could he lead him through it? Thus, lost in thought, he came to a standstill. The mouse remained standing there and became dried up.

The camel asked him, "O My Companion over mountains and forests. Why this hesitation and why this perplexity?

Take courage and step into the river".

The mouse answered: "I am afraid of being drowned". The camel replied: "Let me see how deep the water is and whether you will drown or not". He placed one leg into the water and

then said: "O Mouse, my Shaikh, my guide. The water is only up to my knee. So proceed leading me through".

The mouse replied: "The water only reaches up to your knee. That is so many times over my head. There is a big difference between your leg and mine".
The camel said: "Please do not become rude and insulting. Come straight into the water and guide me along. Up to now, you were very proud of having led me and you acquired great honor from that. O you foolish one, I allowed myself to be led by you, so that your foolishness may increase and become manifest."
The mouse replied: "For me to enter the water will mean certain destruction. I repent, please pardon me. After this I shall not even think about becoming your leader and your Shaikh."

He said:
"For Allah Ta'ala's sake have I repented of my sins
Kindly save me from the dangerous waters."
The camel, on hearing of the repentance of the mouse, felt sorry for him and said: "All right. Come and sit upon my hump. Another hundred mice like yourself can sit upon my back and with safety cross over the water.

Remain a subject if Allah Ta'ala did not make you a ruler.
And do not sail in a boat if, you did not learn sailing.
And grant your copper to the men of chemistry
So that they, through your company with them, can change you to gold."

(In other words, by keeping the company of the righteous saints of Allah Ta'ala you will derive benefit from them, bringing about changes for the better).

"If you are like a stone, senseless, deprived of the fear of the Hereafter, seek the company of a saint and become a pearl. And refrain from criticizing the saints and from accusing the king of theft, for what need has the king of stealing?"

Lesson

The saints of Allah Ta'ala carry a precious treasure within themselves. In their sight the whole world is insignificant and worthless, because their hearts are linked with the Creator of this world. Hence, do not underestimate them and do not compare your nights and days with theirs. Do not become deceived by your worldly dignity and honor like the mouse. If ever you should consider yourself superior to the saintly ones then, you will become humiliated and deprived of good. In the end you, like the mouse, you too will have to sit upon their backs, with the purpose of crossing over to safety, and like the mouse, you too will have to repent.

Hence, from the first day remove from your mind the love of splendor of this world, worldly honor, worldly wealth, esoteric knowledge and soulless actions. Remove these loves from your mind and form a sincere contact with some saint of Allah Ta'ala. Within a few days, you will come to know and you will swear what abundance of benefit it has brought to you. (Use worldly wealth. Do not love it more than Allah Ta'ala and his Rasul).

You should also address your Shaikh like how Hazrat Khawaja Majzoob (Rahmatullah Alaihe) said in respect of his Shaikh:

"You effaced the effects of the idols and you enabled me to witness the grandeur of Allah Ta'ala
You transformed my eyes into such eyes that can see the reality and turned my heart into one that can perceive the greatness of the Creator

My heart was engulfed in negligence, when suddenly you acquainted it with Allah Ta'ala. Thus, you made me unconcerned with all besides Him.

Practicing on Deen seemed like a burden, while being engrossed in the world was easy,

You have now made the burden a pleasure and what seemed to be a pleasure (preoccupation with the world) has become a burden.

You have imbued me' with courage and ushered this weakling into such ranks, the ranks of those endowed with that great responsibility (of conveying Deen)
This heart of iron you have melted with a heart burning with the love of Allah Ta'ala,
You have made restless one who had never experienced this pain (Love of Allah Ta'ala)

O Majzoob you are leaving this threshold with a great fortune,
A million thanks that Allah Ta'ala sent me to your door"

The Story of the Killing of the Elephant Cub

In India, a group of friends on a journey wandered far away from home. Along the way, they experienced great difficulty and hunger, until they had become very much distressed and impatient with the pangs of hunger.
One intelligent person amongst the group advised them:
"Look, there in front of you are the cubs of an elephant. Do not hunt the cubs. The elephant has gone somewhere. If you should kill and eat his cub, he is surely not going to leave anyone of you alive. Therefore, listen carefully to my advice". However, because of their great hunger they did not show any patience. They killed one of the cubs, roasted its meat and ate it. The intelligent person said to them, "Alas, if only you had rather eaten the grass of the forest! If only you had taken precautions against this! Now you will see the result of your actions".
One man from among the group acted upon the advice of the intelligent man. He kept himself from eating the meat. He ate grass instead and went to sleep a distance away from the rest of them. He thought that remaining among the unjust, would make him one of them and the elephant would destroy him too, in revenge.

After a while, the elephant came back and saw the blood of his cub. He immediately understood what had happened. He

was in extreme rage and anger. It appeared as if smoke and fire were coming out of his trunk. He came to where these people were lying asleep and saw one man sleeping alone some distance away. He smelled the mouth of this one first and walked around him three times, but he did not get the smell of the meat of his cub from his mouth. He considered him innocent of the crime and left him to go further to the others. From the mouth of the others, he got the smell of the blood of his cub, so he trampled each and everyone of them. He then threw the pieces into the air by way of revenge for his cub.

Now Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says, "O you People! You murder people and seize their belongings, Remember Allah Ta'ala is well aware of your tyranny. The odor from an unjust one smells of injustice. An elephant recognizes the smell of his cub.

That respected one (i.e. Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) who could smell the fragrance of Allah Ta'ala coming from Yemen; do you think that he could not smell out the evil doers of his time?" The Prophet said, "On the waves of the air I smell Allah Ta'ala's fragrance coming from the direction of Yemen." This was a reference to Hazrat Owais Qarni's love for Allah Ta'ala and his sincerity and Imaan.

"The bad smell of arrogance, greed and lustful desires comes out of conversation. Just like the bad smell exuding from the mouth of him who eats onions. O you people! You commit sinful acts and then go to sleep and the unpleasant smell thereof reaches up to the heavens".

Lesson

My Shaikh after relating this story used to say, "It is not so dangerous to harm an elephant, as it is to harm his cubs. For the elephant might bear harm caused to it, but if any harm or injury comes to its cub, it will take revenge and not rest until the person is destroyed." Then with this as a basis, Hazrat used to say that in case of sins and disobedience against Allah Ta'ala, repentance will bring pardon, but for those who trouble and harm His saints, Allah Ta'ala takes revenge against them. Thus,

Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) is reported to have said in a Hadith Qudsi where Allah Ta'ala says:

"Whoever harasses or persecutes My friends (the saints) I declare war against them".

May Allah Ta'ala grant us all the proper respect and honor for the saints of Allah Ta'ala. Ameen.

The Virtue of Requesting Dua'a from Others

"If due to the misfortune of sins, you do not possess a tongue of acceptance, go to the friends of Allah Ta'ala and request them for dua'as. Request those brothers of purity to pray on your behalf."

Once revelation came to Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam): "O Moosa, call upon Me with such a tongue that has not committed any sin." Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) replied: "O Our Lord, none of us possess such a tongue". The reply came, "Call upon Us with the tongue of others".
(In other words, request others to make dua'a for you, because you did not sin through their mouths).

"When did you ever commit sins through another's tongue?
So with the tongue of others call me, "O Allah!"

Note: Here Allah Ta'ala is giving a lesson to Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam)'s people through him. The Ummat (followers) are the sinful ones while the Prophet is sinless. So outwardly, the command came to Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) but in actual fact, the address is directed to his Ummat.

"Or cleanse your mouth and make your lazy, negligent soul alert and wide awake".

This address is also directed at Nabi Moosa's (Alaihis Salaam) Ummat, "The name of Allah Ta'ala is pure. When you take His Name, your mouth too will become clean. The impurities will pack their bags and leave. Everything opposite runs away from its opposite, as night flees when the day breaks forth with its

light; likewise the purity of Allah Ta'ala's Name dispels your impurity.

When the name of Allah Ta'ala comes onto the tongue
The impurity and darkness of sin cannot remain.

Lesson

In this story, there is a great lesson for the seekers of Allah Ta'ala. Irrespective of what their condition is and how much they are drowned in the disobedience of Allah Ta'ala, they should not delay in making Zikrullah due to their impurities. Do not delay in making Zikrullah, awaiting first the fruits of rectification of the self. In fact, through Zikrullah, the rectification (islaah) will become easy. It is through the Noor of Zikr that one becomes aware of the darkness of sins, because things are easily recognized through their opposites.

Hence, it is proven by experience that when a Zaakir (one performing Zikr) commits a sin, he is quickly granted the grace to repent, because in the Noor of Zikr, the darkness of sins and evil are quickly perceived. Moreover, after the fragrant perfume of Zikr, the evil smell of sin is strongly perceived, causing one to quickly make Taubah and cleanse the heart. It is just like a person who is used to wearing clean clothes. Such a person will not tolerate a dirty spot on it and he will not rest until the dirty spot is washed away. One used to being dressed in dirty clothes, will not even see a new dirty spot on his clothes, because his clothes are full of dirty spots. Even if he does become aware of a dirty spot, there will be no urgency in the heart to cleanse that spot and remove it.

In view of the above, the saints first inculcate into their novices Zikr right from the beginning. And in this way, slowly and gradually all other rectification is accomplished.

The Story that Our Saying 'Ya Allah' is His Reply

Once a devotee was one night making the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala's name in complete sincerity so much so that from this Zikr his saliva too tasted sweet. Shaytaan said to him, "O Sufi, be silent. Why are you reciting this Zikr so profusely? It is of no benefit. After all, you do not get any reply from Allah Ta'ala's side. So what benefit is there in one sided love?" Hearing these words of deceit from Shaytaan, the Sufi became broken-hearted and depressed. He postponed the rest of his Zikr and went to sleep. That night he saw in a dream that Hazrat Khidr (Alaihis Salaam) came to him asking him, "Why were you negligent of Zikr this night?" The Sufi replied: "From Allah Ta'ala's side there was no reply of "Labbaik". From this, I got the impression that my Zikr was not accepted by Him". Hazrat Khidr (Alaihis Salaam) said, "Allah Ta'ala has sent a message to you. He has said, Tell this servant of Mine: "O My servant, your saying: "Allah" is My reply of 'Labbaik' (I am present)." (In other words, when Allah Ta'ala accepts your first "Allah", only then you are granted the ability to say "Allah" a second time. Thus, this second "Allah" is a Labbaik from My side)

And O My Bondsman, this offering of yours and this burning pain and love for Me
All these are My messages to you".
"O My bondsman!, these efforts of yours out of love for Me, your Zikr and your spiritual struggles
Are from My side a reflection of attraction towards Me".

Someone else put it quite nicely:

"My desire (to search for Allah Ta'ala) is the result of Someone's Kindness.
These feet do not lift up they are lifted up.

O My Bondsmen, your fear and your love of Me is a gift from My side
It is the attraction of My Grace and Mercy,

In your every 'Ya Rab, Ya Allah
My Labbaik is included. "I am present".

The soul of an ignorant one is deprived of this Zikr and dua'a
And he is not blessed towards saying 'Ya Rab, Ya Rab".

Lesson

There is good news in this story for those who make Zikr. Hence, at the time of making Zikr, it should be borne in mind that only when our first "Allah" is accepted then the second Zikr of "Allah" follows. Furthermore, the second Zikr must be accepted before the third one follows, while the uttering of the third "Allah" is a clear sign of the acceptance of the second one. Blessed is this gift for the Zaakireen (those who remember Allah Ta'ala). May Allah Ta'ala grant us the ability to make Zikr up to the last breath of our lives. Ameen.

The Story of Majnoon Loving the Dogs of Layla's Street

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says, "Once Majnoon saw the dog of Layla's street going somewhere. He recognized it, started kissing its feet and exhibiting his love for it. Some people saw this and said to him, "O you mad one, what are you doing? Why do you show love for such a dirty animal, full of impurities?" Majnoon replied, "O you, who possess a mere outer form and body; O you, who are deprived of the true taste of love, acquire awareness of the condition of my heart and see it through my eyes. This dog is the creation of my Lord. It is a guard over the street of Layla. In my sight, the dust from the feet of this dog, living in the street of Layla, is better than huge lions. The dog living in the street of Layla in my view is so precious, that I am not prepared to exchange even one hair of its body for many lions. Many a lion has become a slave to the dogs of Layla's street, since these secrets cannot be explained in words, I remain silent and bid you salaam.

O People, if you proceed beyond your worship of outer form and develop contact with the Creator, who is the fountain-head of all beauty,
Then in this world you will start enjoying the blessings of paradise and you will see a rose-garden everywhere".

Lesson

In his love for Layla, Majnoon found the dogs of Layla's street worthy of love. How is it that the Lovers of Allah Ta'ala go to Makkah Sharif and Madina Sharif, but have no love for the inhabitants of these cities? When they return from Hajj, you hear their complaints about the inhabitants of these cities. They relate all the problems they experienced there. Regarding such people, one has the fear that their Hajj was not accepted (maqbool).

In Madina Sharif, once a man bought some yogurt. He said, "This yogurt is too sour. The yogurt in India is better than this". That night he saw Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) in a dream, and he commanded him, "O you disrespectful one, O you who are deprived of love, leave this city! You are not fit to live here" May Allah Ta'ala save us all from showing disrespect and keep us safe from harm. Ameen

In a Hadith, we are told, "O people, love the Arabs." It is a great pity that these days we show no regard for this injunction. My friends, if we intend to give them a word of advice or something which is in their interest and welfare, it is well and good, but it is something different if we in our gatherings continuously backbite and slander them. We should consider it our good fortune to be able to pray for their success and welfare, with prayers from our hearts.

Similarly, this story teaches us to fulfill the rights of the Ulama, the saintly ones and, especially, the one who is our spiritual guide. Also the rights which their family members and children have on us and the correct manners we should have towards them. It also teaches us the proper respect and honor we should show towards the Imams and the muezzins of

mosques, because these persons are the keepers and custodians of the Lord's Houses. For this reason, we should love them and consider service to them as a means towards acquiring the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. Just imagine, we fear troubling and harassing the dog of the District Commissioner. In fact, this fear is fear of the Commissioner himself. Similarly, whoever has any kind of general or special contact with Allah Ta'ala should in a similar manner be honored according to their degree of connection with Him. However, those people who are deprived of proper understanding, as Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says, do not understand these things:

"O Allah Ta'ala, we seek from You the ability to show correct Adaab (manners)
Because the one devoid of Adaab is he who is deprived of Your Grace.

O Allah Ta'ala, grant us the ability to show correct Adaab. Ameen."

The Story of Layla and the Caliph of Baghdad

Once the Caliph of Baghdad questioned Layla, "You are so dark and ugly, yet, Majnoon is so madly in love with you. You have no special beauty beyond other beautiful women so why is this Majnoon so mad about you?" Lalyla replied:

"O Caliph, if you also possessed the eyes of Majnoon, you too would have become oblivious to both worlds.

"O Caliph, you are involved with your self-centeredness. His love for me has made him (Majnoon) unconscious of himself and this unconsciousness in the path of love is beneficial while consciousness is harmful."

(In other words, it is a sign of true love when a person is only aware and conscious of the existence of a beloved, while being unconscious and unaware of anyone else).

Lesson

In this story, the following advises are found:

1. Hajee Imdadullah Muhajir Makki (Rahmatullah Alaihe), used to say:

   تو کر بے خبر ساری خبروں سے مجھکو

   الٰہی رہوں اک خبردار تیرا

   "O Lord, make me unaware of all others
   And let me remain conscious only of Your existence".

   This does not mean that he prays to become negligent and unmindful of relatives, wife, children and other loved ones. But, what he means is that let my care over them also be for Allah Ta'ala's sake, and not just being good to them by way of recompense, or expecting something in return. In this way, contact with Allah Ta'ala's creation through the sincerity of intention becomes contact with the Creator.

2. The second point of advice is that one should, through the company of the saintly ones, endeavor to acquire a sight of respect for the Sahabah, the friends of Allah Ta'ala, the Kaaba, Madina Sharif, the Hajr-e-Aswad, Safa, Marwa, Mina, Arafaat, Muzdalifah, all the mosques of the world, and the servants of these mosques. We should, through the saintly ones and their company, acquire the correct perspective, which can only be attained through their company. There is a big difference between the sight of the eyes and the insight of the heart. The sight of the eyes is subject to the heart's perception. If the heart's perception is correct, the sight of the eyes will also be correct. If the heart is ill, due to Kufr, inequity, and the spiritual darkness that is created through them, then the eyes, too, do not function properly. In such a case, it will be concluded that due to

wrong inner perception one will become involved with the wrong sight.

3. The third point is this that the ordinary man looks at the friends of Allah Ta'ala with his imperfect empty life and sight and thinks that they too are empty and deprived of all good and happiness. Once a spiritually bankrupt person told Hajee Imdadullah Muhaajir Makki (Rahmatullah Alaihe): "I am surprised that Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), the founder of Darul Uloom Deoband and Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) became Mureeds of yours." Hajee Saheb replied: "Yes brother, I am also surprised that these persons chose someone like myself, to become Mureeds" Since, Hajee Imdadullah Saheb (Rahmatullah Alaihe) had completely annihilated his Nafs, he did not show any displeasure at this criticism. May Allah Ta'ala make us all His sincere lovers. Ameen.

Khawaja Majzoob (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"I found some complaining day and night
While others, I found in worries day and night

I did not find anyone happy under the skies,
Only Majzoob I found happy in this place of sorrow.

If they desire protection (Oh! Allah Ta'ala) from grief and sorrow
They should become Your mad lovers."

The Story of Majnoon Writing Layla's Name on the Sand

Once Majnoon was sitting on the bank of a river repeatedly writing the name of Layla on the sand. A passerby saw him and asked:

"O Majnoon, what are you busy doing? To whom are you writing this letter?"

Majnoon replied:

"When the parting from my Layla distresses me, I write her name repeatedly
And in this way give consolation to a heart grieved by separation."

Now Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) gives advice,

"*O people, this is the effect of sensual love.
Can the true love for the Master be any less than that?"*

Lesson

In this story, there is an answer to those without inner sight who criticize those who continuously and repeatedly recite the name of Allah Ta'ala. They ask, "Why do these devotees make so much Zikr and project so much love for Allah Ta'ala? Why do they continue pouring out before Him their complaints, sighs and lamentations? We have also studied so many books. We also possess libraries. We also give lectures and talks. Why is it that we do not acquire the same state as them?" Then, after these questions, they explain their own deprivation by saying: "These devotees do their Zikr, spiritual vigils, their sighs and crying before Allah Ta'ala, to be seen by men, to attract people towards them and to gain worldly benefit." If only these unjust ones could observe these saintly ones in the privacy of their inner rooms, engaged in prayer and Zikr. Who is there to witness their prostrations? For whom are these prostration's made in privacy, for whom do they wet their places of prostration with their tears? Who is there to see them sending their sighs and Ah's up to Allah Ta'ala, before whom they complain of all their pains and distresses?

"*Majzoob has cried over all the calamities of this world;
Now to shower Your Grace and Blessing upon him is left to You, Oh! Allah Ta'ala".*

These are the saints of Allah Ta'ala whose Ah's, their Salaams and their messages continuously reach up to the Throne of Allah Ta'ala and who have a strong connection with

Him. While, they remain silent here on earth their hearts perpetually declare their love for Him.

"The saintly ones are silent
But their repetitive cries reach the Beloved

And reach up to His Throne.
To whom are they showing their blessed solitude,
So that they reap material benefit?
In fact their "Ah's" are hidden from the whole universe."

Now from this story, we turn to something else. If Layla, who was a mere corpse, producing stinking urine and feces, could make someone fall madly in love, then what about that Being Who creates thousands of Laylas and then destroys them, and Who is the fountain head of all beautiful forms and the centre of all beauty? Can that Being with His perfect beauty and love not make one mad in love with Him. He is the Holy and Perfect Being. His mad ones are also holy. The Prophets and Saints are His mad lovers who will continue to be His successful and honored ones in both worlds. Allah Ta'ala grants this bountiful present to His lovers.

In contrast, what does Layla's Majnoon get? Majnoon gets worldly love which is something figurative - not true love. Figurative means something which is not the true thing. As such, one who is involved with figurative love will always be deceived. The beauty, for which he is prepared to die, departs when the object of that beauty dies. On the other hand, the one who is involved with Divine Love, the object of his love is the Being of Allah Ta'ala, Who is Everlasting and never perishes. For this reason, his love remains forever and when the lover passes away, he carries with himself the pleasure of the hope of meeting his True Love.

"When either the lover or the beloved dies
Or through old age there is a lessening of beauty,
Figurative love fades.
While True Love remains as strong as ever".

After death, from the life of "Barzakh" (the grave) until the gathering place of Qiyamat, and right up to paradise, the lovers of Allah Ta'ala will continue to have His Name on their lips repeatedly.

From the story of Layla and Majnoon one should not have the doubts about the permissibility of 'illicit' love which is completely haraam. Illicit sensual love is the opposite of true love and the meeting of two opposite entities is impossible. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) narrates the story of Layla and Majnoon to give the lesson of love for Allah Ta'ala. This is similar to teaching small children how to read Urdu by starting to teach the letters of the Alphabet: 'Laam' is for 'Laddu' (a sweetmeat). Everyone knows the aim is not to draw attention to Laddu. It is only used to teach the letter Laam. Similarly, if one teaches the letter 'Alif' is for Ullu (Owl) again, the aim is not to draw attention to the owl but by taking into consideration the temperament of children, it is a means of making them remember the alphabets.

"***The whole creation is children except the lovers of Allah Ta'ala and the darling servants of Allah Ta'ala,***
And for as long as one does not attain freedom from the jungle of desires of the self, the body will remain immature".

In other words, even if the body becomes a hundred years old it will remain immature as long as it is not freed from the desires of the Nafs. Readers would have understood clearly that Maulana's aim in telling the story of Layla and Majnoon is taking into consideration our childlike nature, so that through this we should learn the love of Allah Ta'ala. If Majnoon had to dig up the grave of Layla and see her rotten and smelling corpse, he would have considered his whole life wasted and would surely have repented of his love. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) said that the deeds Majnoon committed after becoming mad will not be taken into account on the day of reckoning and there will no punishment.
But, he could be called to account for those actions which led him to become mad, which could have been avoided i.e. "Why

did he give his life for worldly love?" Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says: "Figurative, sensual, illicit love is a form of Allah Ta'ala's punishment." May Allah Ta'ala protect us all. Once Maulana's nephew, Maulana Shabbir Ali sent a handsome young beardless student to him on an errand. Maulana was at that time busy writing in an upstairs room in solitude. The young student came into Maulana's room. As soon as Maulana saw him, he left the room and came down to the ground floor. He did not find it suitable to stay with the young boy in the privacy of the room for even one minute. He said to Maulana Shabbir Ali, "Don't ever send a beardless young boy to me in private". Maulana Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) wanted to teach his Mureeds a lesson of piety. In the path of Allah Ta'ala, privacy with a strange woman and with a handsome beardless boy is as dangerous as deadly poison. Those who desire to follow the path 'of Tasawwuf and those who are seekers of Allah Ta'ala, should avoid these things just as much as they would avoid a poisonous snake.

"If you are going to go after passing beauty,
It is a spotted snake which will bite you".

No other sins will harm the Saalik more than casting evil glances and illicit love. Very strong darkness envelopes one due to figurative love. In fact, a person's direction of Qiblah changes through it. If we take the heart to be a compass and take the needle to point towards Allah Ta'ala, at ninety degrees west, other sins will cause the needle to move away two or four degrees towards the north or south. By making Taubah, it will quickly move back to ninety degrees. But, when the heart becomes involved with Haraam love for women or young boys and this love settles in the heart, the needle of the compass moves one hundred and eighty degrees to the east and the heart moves very far away from Allah Ta'ala.

May Allah Ta'ala protect Akhtar and his physical as well as spiritual children as well as all Muslims of this world from Haraam love and its punishment. Ameen. O Lord of the

Universe, through Your Mercy and through Your Nabi, the Nabi of Mercy, accept it.

If a person happens to become plagued with bad desires and involved in illicit love, one should speedily take refuge with one of the Saints of Allah Ta'ala. These friends of Allah Ta'ala have the perfect and effective treatment for this disease. Thousands of Allah Ta'ala's servants have been healed of it. Their prescriptions are most effective against this great poisonous disease. Just as arsenic is deadly, similarly to act upon the demands of the self is also deadly for our spiritual and physical self to remove these poisons from the path of truth is beneficial indeed.

The Story of Hazrat Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) and Tauheed

Revelation once came to Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) wherein Allah Ta'ala said to him: "O Moosa, I have made you My Chosen One". Hazrat Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) replied: "O Lord, what is the special quality through which You make Your Chosen Ones, so that I may increase in it and rise in Your esteem?" Allah Ta'ala replied: "I love My bondsmen very much when they behave towards Me like infants, who in spite of their mother's punishment and anger, still cling to her, instead of fleeing. When that mother slaps him, he still runs to her crying, and holds onto her strongly". I have seen on many occasions how a mother beat her three or four year old child, telling him to get out of the house, but the child, shouting and crying, held fast onto the mother's legs.

O Allah Ta'ala, I beg of You through Your Mercy and Grace that You grant Akhtar a strong relationship with You, even stronger than that between a mother and child and also grant this same favor to all the Muslims. Ameen.

"The small child does not want help from anyone save the mother
He even shows no inclination to his father
Instead only looks upon his mother
As the source and origin of all good and evil.
O Moosa (Alaihis Salaam), your imagination and connection with
Us in good and evil is similar,
That except for Us, your attention is not drawn to anyone else.
O Moosa (Alaihis Salaam), in your view, anyone other than Us
Is ineffectual like a clod of earth or a stone.
Whether that one is an infant, a young man or an old man".

Lesson

In this story, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) has explained Nabi Moosa's (Alaihis Salaam) conception of Tauheed and then gives the advice that we too should try to bring our contact with Him on the same level. We should also pray for and work out plans, so that our relationship becomes like that of a small child with his mother and with the same dependence on Him. No matter in what condition Allah Ta'ala keeps us, whether in calamities or in comfort, in health or in sickness, whether in a stage of poverty or richness! Whether He keeps us pleased or displeased, whether He brings pleasant or unpleasant circumstances, whether He brings conditions in accordance with our temperaments and to our liking or conditions against our temperaments -in all these cases and circumstances, we should turn to Him and not flee from Him. No matter what the conditions, we should place our foreheads only on His Threshold and cry before Him, as we beg of Him to keep us safe from all evils, and beg of Him pardon for sins. Apart from Allah Ta'ala, we should look at no one else as our place of refuge and no matter what conditions He sends upon us, we should be satisfied therewith, saying: "Alhamdu lillahi alaa kulli haal, - All praise be to Allah Ta'ala in every condition".

If, we become displeased and impatient at the prevailing conditions, the calamity most definitely will not subside, but our Imaan may leave us. That means that together with the loss of the worldly things, our success in the Hereafter can also be destroyed. When there is a delay in the acceptance of your dua'as, do not become distressed, but remain hopeful. Think! Despairing of Allah Ta'ala's mercy is equivalent to Kufr. Nabi Ya'qoub (Alaihis Salaam) prayed earnestly for his missing son, Hazrat Yusuf (Alaihis Salaam) but after forty years, this dua'a was accepted and answered. Allah Ta'ala is the Ruler (Haakim) and at the same time He is the Wise One (Hakeem). He knows the spiritual progress made and sincerity acquired through sorrows. And He knows what rank is gained through patient perseverance, ranks which are unattainable through spiritual strivings (Mujahada).

Remember the calamities faced by the Prophets, the Sahabah and the saints, it will supply you inner strength. Visit the gatherings of the saintly ones, inform them of your spiritual conditions, and consult with them. Continue to admit before Allah Ta'ala your weakness and inability, seeking from Him, safety and welfare. Think earnestly about His attribute of being the Most Merciful One, the Wise One. All these things will be easily understood from attending the gatherings of the saintly ones.

Another point worth bearing in mind is that a minor calamity is a protection from a major calamity. One should therefore say: "O Allah Ta'ala, thank you that you did not send a bigger calamity over me. O Allah Ta'ala, we are weak. Change this calamity through Your merciful Grace, to a bounty of safety". Once a holy man set forth one morning from his home. As he came out, his head struck the door frame and the blow was so heavy that he was forced to lie down. He uttered the words: "Alhamdu lillahi alaa kulli haal - All praise be to Allah Ta'ala at every condition". Allah Ta'ala is the Wise One, All-Knowing. In each and every actions of His, there is hidden good and wisdom. His servant objected to this utterance: "I

don't understand and I cannot see what benefit there was for you in this blow (which struck your head)".

Shortly, it became known that the direction in which the saintly one was proceeding, a few enemies with sticks were waiting to attack and murder him. When this became evident, everyone understood.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us such righteous belief, which will make us beloved in His sight and accepted by Him. Ameen.

The Story of Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) and His Invitation to Bilqees

Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) sent a messenger to BiIqees inviting her to Islam:

"O Bilqees, arise and look at your actual homeland and proper contact with Allah Ta'ala and on the banks of the river of truth seek the pearls of the pleasures of Allah Ta'ala.

O Bilqees, your sisters who have already embraced Islam are through the blessing thereof residing in the enlightened heavens.

O Bilqees, what has come over you that you are still in love with this dead world?
Allah Ta'ala has granted those sisters of yours such great favors and bounties. Do you know that?

O Bilqees, arise and come to see the inner wealth
And come and enjoy the fruits of our treasure.

O Bilqees, arise and come the ocean of generosity
And enjoy the benefit even without means.

The means we possess are not ours
But the bounty and Grace of the Divine Being.
Your believing sisters are enjoying the pleasures of a life of faith.
And for how long will you continue to tolerate the sorrows of worldly distress?

O Bilqees arise and become the companion of good fortune.
And become disconnected from the kingdom of Saba which is a temporary abode.

In pleasure, you resemble that Faqir who in spite of his poverty starts beating a drum
And says I am king of the unworthy ones.

Leave that aside and become inclined to the everlasting life of the Hereafter.
O Bilqees, arise and of your own choice prefer to accept guidance
Before this worship of impurity and this dead world
And before death should come along and leave you no choice.

O Bilqees, come along and before death overtakes you accept Islam
And see the kingdom of Allah Ta’ala's nearness and its everlasting nature.

O Bilqees, discard your misplaced pride and arrogance
For before Allah Ta’ala humility is acceptable and arrogance has no worth.

O Bilqees, arise and do not oppose fate, otherwise death will come
And take you by the ear to the true kingdom and then regret will be of no avail.

O Bilqees, if out of your own choice you do not embrace Islam now,
At Death, your ear will be pulled just like a policeman pulls the ear of a thief at the police station.

O Bilqees, for how long are you going to continue stealing shoes from these donkeys.
If you are to steal, come and accept Islam and then start stealing rubies.

O Bilqees, your believing sisters have acquired the everlasting wealth of Islam and Imaan
And here you are still pleased with this despicable world.

Blessed is the one who has been freed from this temporary world.
For death will come and take away this world and its pleasures

And the good one is he who does not put his mouth to this unfaithful world.

O Bilqees, arise and come to witness the everlasting kingdom of kings of Deen,
Which they carry around with them as they walk".

(They are as Allah Ta'ala explains**:** ***"They have a Noor with which they walk among men."*** Allah Ta'ala grants a Noor in the hearts of the righteous believers, which they take with them as they walk among men. That Noor is their garden and their springtime but ordinary men do not see it).

"Come and fly in the heavens without wings and feathers
Like the sun, the full moon and the crescent moon".

(In other words: Learn Allah Ta'ala's love and connect yourself to the Lord of the Throne so that you become enlightened like the sun or the full moon).

"O Bilqees, through the blessings of embracing Imaan
You will at all times experience the inner kingdom and possess the Royal Throne.

Because He who blesses kings with thrones and crowns
Will always be with you in your heart,
So imagine your kingdom and good fortune.

O You who have been blessed with the great treasure of Allah Ta'ala's love and nearness
And been endowed with this everlasting wealth.
Your life is in itself a great bounty,

At death when all shall be separated,
Your kingdom of Allah Ta'ala's love will not be separated from you".

(In other words, the great wealth of inner nearness to Allah Ta'ala which has entered your life, your soul will take it, to be presented before Allah Ta'ala because your kingdom and wealth has become yourself).

Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) gave this invitation to Bilqees to enter Islam, saying to her: "O Bilqees, discard this outer world of your kingdom of worldly wealth and create spiritual wealth within yourself. Through that all the pomp and splendor will be created inside you and there will be no need to involve yourself with outer show of pomp and splendor. In the retention of those outer signs of wealth, you only appear to be fortunate, but in fact, you and your fortune are two different things. The two of you are contrasting entities. But if you embrace Islam, fortune will become your very existence through the blessings of your inner wealth and thereafter that wealth will remain with you forever more. "

The Story of Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) Inviting Fir'aun to Islam

Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) said to Fir'aun: "Accept my one plea to you and be blessed with four bounties". Fir'aun asked: "What is your one plea?" Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) said: "Announce publicly that there is no God save Allah Ta'ala. He is the Creator of the heavenly bodies on high and the stars. Here on earth, He is the Creator of men, Shaytaans, Jinn and animals. He is also the Creator of the mountains, the oceans, the forests and the deserts. His kingdom is unlimited and He is without equal and is peerless. He is the Watcher over every person and controls the entire universe. He grants sustenance to every living being. He is the keeper of the heavens and the earth. He creates flowers in plants and is aware of the inner secrets of the hearts of men. He is the Ruler over the rebellious ones and the punisher of them. He is the King over every king. He has the right to rule with authority. Whatever He wishes, He does. No one can oppose Him.

Fir'aun listened to all this and asked: "What are the four things that I will receive in exchange for that? Perhaps the promise of those things will cause my belief to become weak and through my acceptance of Islam, the locks of unbelief of numerous other souls may be broken and they will also embrace Islam. Perhaps through these things our land may become green and fertile with the true knowledge of Allah Ta'ala. Quickly tell me what those four things are, for it is possible that the door towards my Hidaayat (guidance) will open up".

Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) then through the command of Allah Ta'ala started mentioning to him the four promises. He said to him:

1. "If you embrace Islam, you will remain in good health always and will never become sick. You will continue to be desirous of death. (In other words, in accepting Islam you will have formed such a close contact with Allah Ta'ala that through it you will see the prospects of such a treasure, that you will inexpectancy thereof make all your selfish desires subject and subordinate to the pleasure and wishes of Allah Ta'ala. You will be prepared to exert yourself spiritually to such an extent that you will even be prepared to sacrifice your life. If in someone's house there is a treasure buried, that person will willingly and with pleasure be prepared to break down that house to get to the treasure. Similarly, the true lovers and seekers of Allah Ta'ala will be prepared to destroy their lustful desires, in order to attain the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and close contact with Him. After this destruction, the great bounty and favor they acquire is the envy of the whole world. It is only after one tears away the clouds of desire that the true light of the sun shines through.

2. Fir'aun, just as the worms attacking the vine's green leaves deprive the plants of producing grapes, so also does this despicable world make you busy with the pleasures of the flesh. But when Allah Ta'ala's bounty and favor prevails, then you will become wakeful and aware and discard the worldly pleasures and become busy with the truth. The

result will be that every vein and fiber of yours will be filled with the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala and you will become endowed with the character of Allah Ta'ala.

3. The third promise is this: Presently, you have one kingdom at your disposal but after embracing Islam, you will have two kingdoms. The kingdom you now possess was given to you in the time when you were rebelling against Allah Ta'ala. Can you imagine that in obedience to Him what great gifts you will receive? If you have received so much during the time when you are disobeying His commands, how much more will be your prize for obeying Him?

4. The fourth thing that you will receive is that you will remain forever young and your hair will remain black. This is but an insignificant bounty in my opinion. It is granted like the promise to a small child to whom the promise is made: "If you go to the Madrassa, I will give you a walnut". In actual fact, in comparison with the knowledge that the child is to receive by going to Madrassa, the walnut is insignificant".

Listening to these promises, Fir'aun's heart became inclined to Islam to a certain extent. He said: "All right, I shall consult with my wife". He then went to his house to consult with his wife Aasiya (Alaihas Salaam), who gave him some sound and wonderful words of advice as Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) explains in the following chapter.

The Story of Fir'aun Consulting With His Wife Aasiya (Alaihas Salaam) Over Embracing Islam

Fir'aun went home and told the whole story to his wife. She replied: "You should sacrifice your life for such promises. This conversation is the detailed description of many favors, which are like the text, so you should quickly acquire those favors and never leave them. The crop is ready

for the harvest and it is most beneficial. Up to now all the time that has passed by went by without benefit".

She said this and began to cry bitterly. Then she again was filled with vigour and said, "Be blessed, O bald-headed one. The Sun has become your crown. Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) has hidden your evil deeds and now wishes to give you a wealth of inner treasure. The fault of a bald-headed one can be hidden by a simple hat, but your faults Allah Ta'ala wishes to cover through the crown (of His Mercy). O Fir'aun, my advice to you is this: Do not wait for consultation. You should have accepted that invitation to embrace Islam in that very gathering. The offer that Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) gave you is not an insignificant one, of which you should seek advice. It is such a thing that if it was placed before a creature of high rank like the sun, it would immediately and willingly come from the heavens to the earth to accept it. Do you realize what a promise this is and do you realize what a gift this is? O Fir'aun, this is such a mercy from Allah Ta'ala as was the mercy that came to Iblees. It is not Allah Ta'ala's way to treat a rebellious and unjust one like you with such kindness. I am surprised that on seeing this kindness, you don't burst open out of pleasure and happiness. I am surprised that you are still intact. If your gallbladder had burst open out of happiness and satisfaction, you would have received reward in both worlds - a good name in this world and salvation in the Hereafter.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says that whosoever's gallbladder bursts open with sorrow or pleasure and dies, is a martyr (Shaheed) and will enjoy the benefits of both worlds. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) further says: "When evil ones confront saintly ones, they try to change the saintly ones to their line of thinking and ways. When the saintly ones refuse to change, they begin to cause them injury and hurt. The Angels will take up the tears of the saints in their mouths and on their wings and Allah Ta'ala will weigh them in similar fashion and to the same extent as He values the blood of the martyrs."

Hazrat Aasiya (Alaihas Salaam) told Fir'aun:

"O Fir'aun! Do not doubt or hesitate! Sacrifice one drop and in return acquire from the Messenger of Allah Ta'ala a whole ocean".
(In other words, subjugate yourself and avoid all pride and become honored with Allah Ta'ala's nearness).

"Allah! Allah! Why do you delay in accepting the invitation? This is a great sympathy for you that the sea is itself calling for you with such insistence. Quickly sell yourself into the hands of the ocean which invites you. Quickly run and seek the ocean. It is an ocean of Mercy and not any insignificant little stream.
If you are without hands and feet and unable to reach the ocean of your own accord. Place yourself into the obedience of Moosa (Alaihis Salaam), become a ball for Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) and he will become your feet. O Fir'aun, do not doubt the promises he made to you and do not consider them mere deception.
Allah! Allah! Come forward to acquire those bountiful favors quickly. And do not become destroyed through wrong conceptions. And when Allah Ta'ala Himself is calling you, do not hesitate or delay. As far as is possible, hurry up and submit your heart before Allah Ta'ala.

Allah! Allah! Quickly start making righteous deeds and become happy through the glad tidings coming to you.

Allah! Allah! For how much longer are you going to be rebellious?
And for how long are you to keep your neck high in arrogance?

Allah! Allah! When that Allah Ta'ala is making you ashamed of your sins therefore give thanks to Him.

Allah! Allah! When Allah Ta'ala through His Grace gives you the path towards Him then, bend down your neck in submission to Him.

Allah! Allah! O Fir'aun, see how in spite of your blasphemy He still accepts you. Is this favor and gift not something to be greatly appreciated? All Graceful favors are nothing in the face

of His Grace because an earthly being reaches up to the Seventh Heaven and a human being can become angelic.

O Fir'aun, who can get such a market, where in exchange for one rose a whole bed of roses is given?

Who can find such a market where in exchange for one seed, a hundred trees are given and for one seed numerous ears of corn?"

Hearing all this from Aasiya (Alaihas Salaam), Fir'aun said: "All right, I shall now consult with my Chief Minister, Haamaan."

Hazrat Aasiya (Alaihas Salaam) said to him: "Do not tell him about this. Do not consult with him because he is not fit to be consulted. How can a blind one appreciate the Royal Falcon?" But Fir'aun did not listen to her and proceeded to consult with Haamaan. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says: "The consultant of an unsuitable one is himself unsuitable". For this reason, Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) used to consult with Hazrat Abu Bakr who was a suitable consultant while Abu Jahl used to consult with Abu Lahab. Every person consults with someone similar to himself. Therefore, when Haamaan heard the story from Fir'aun, he leaped, jumped about and in sorrow he tore his garment to pieces. He made a big noise, and starting to cry aloud, throwing his turban on the ground he said: "Alas, Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) has insulted you, my sire. You are after all such that the whole universe is submissive to you. From the East and the West, everybody brings their tribute to you. Kings and Rulers willingly kiss the dust of your house. He has degraded you greatly. You are the one to whom the whole world prostrates and whom they all worship. And yet you want to listen to him and become an ordinary slave. You being Lord now want to consult with me about becoming a slave of another slave. In my opinion, it is better for you to be burnt in a thousand fires than to be insulted and degraded like this. If you are going to accept the invitation to embrace Islam, then kill me first, so that I do not see this insult to you with my eyes. Strike my neck quickly so that I do not see that sight, that

heaven should become earth or that a God should become a slave. In other words, that our slave should become our Master and we become his slave."

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) at this stage rebukes Haamaan saying: "O Haamaan, You rejected one, how many governments were there not in this world, stretching from east to west, but today there is no sign of them left on this earth? It seems today, as if they never existed. Even the east and the west will not remain forever. So how can they keep others to remain?"

"This pride and arrogance in Haamaan was a poisonous killer
And from such poisonous drink he was drunk and became foolish".

Through this advise of Haamaan, Fir'aun declined to accept the truth and thereby handed himself over to everlasting disgrace and punishment. May Allah Ta'ala save us all from arrogance and pride and the rejection of truth, Ameen.

When Fir'aun came under the influence of Haamaan's misleading deceit and rejected Nabi Moosa's (Alaihis Salaam) invitation, Nabi Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) said to him: "We have been very generous and graceful to you, but it is not in your good fortune to accept it. So what is there that we can do?"

The Story of Majnoon and His Camel

Once Majnoon was riding on his camel going towards the house of Layla. But as he became drowned in thoughts about Layla, the reins of the camel became loose in his hand. The camel then instead of going towards the house of Layla, turned his direction towards home, where the camel had a little one for which it was beside itself with love.

When Majnoon recovered from his state of absent-mindedness, he became quite distressed and perplexed. The camel had gone back to where it had set out. He again forced the camel to take the route towards Layla's house. But, it happened quite a few times that after traveling for a short

while, thoughts about Layla would occupy his mind and while he was in an absent-minded state the camel would turn back. In the end, Majnoon became angry and he said: "My Layla is in front and the camel's Layla is behind". Its little one makes it turn back. For this reason, this path of love cannot be traversed. And during this whole life of mine, I will not be able to reach my Beloved" Hence, he jumped from the top of the camel. He fell and broke one of his legs. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) now says:

"Life is starving through being separated from the Lord of the 'Throne, Who is the truly Beloved. However, the body in search of means of livelihood, like the camel, goes in the opposite direction".

Then Majnoon said:

"Now I have become a ball
And I roll along, as the bats of Layla's love drive me along".

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) now gives the advice from this story: For the love of Layla, a mere rotten corpse, Majnoon made so much effort. But we who are supposed to be the lovers of the Lord, how can our love be any less? It is more fitting that we should for the sake of His love become like a ball to be driven about.

Lesson

At this time, the reason for our negligence and unmindfulness of the Hereafter is that our soul and mind want to move towards Allah Ta'ala, but our 'Nafs' and desires are inclined to greed and love of the world and hence move in that direction. At all times we have this struggle with our 'Nafs'. Therefore, what we should do is to accept that Layla which is everlasting and to be patient with regard to that Layla which is of a temporary nature. This does not mean that we should discard this world completely and go into the forests. That would be a foolish line of action. Simply, the love of the Hereafter should be in excess of the love of this world. That is sufficient. But, the courage for this is only acquired through

love and contact with a saintly person and being like a slave to him.

The Story of the Person Walking With a Lamp in the Day

One day a person took a burning lamp in his hand during the light of day as he proceeded to the market. Someone said to him, "What is wrong with you? What need is there for a lamp during the light of day?" He replied, "I am searching for man everywhere. I do not see even one man". The person said: "But this market is filled with men". He replied, "No there is no man in this market, only the outer forms of men. These are only bread-eaters and persons involved with their desires. All the persons you see in this market are all carriers of attributes contrary to true manhood. They are not men but persons dressed in the outer forms of men. For a man, the attributes of manhood are necessary. If aloe wood which has a fragrance, does not possess fragrance, then what is the difference between it and other timber? Manhood and humanity is not the name for flesh, fat and skin. Manhood is the name given to those attributes, character and deeds through which Allah Ta'ala's pleasure is attained. If manhood is only for those in manly form, then Ahmad [i.e. Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam)] and Abu Jahl would be equal, yet we know it is not so".

Lesson

If we should on the above criteria take stock of our manhood and humanity, then overall the only real men will be the saintly ones. The rest of those who are supposed to be human beings are only eating and defecating, who are busy with their objectives and what is connected to them. The best example of this is the flour-grinding machine. At one end, the corn is entered into it and at the other end, flour comes out. Similarly, the human body of those who only eat and defecate is also like a machine, where on the one side bread is entered

and at the other side feces come out. It is thus, a machine producing feces and excreta. So those who only look upon their aims in life as eating and defecating are actually calling their bodies a machine producing excreta. May Allah Ta'ala save us from this stupid theory.

Maulana Rumi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) other theme is that man is not the name for flesh and fat, covered in human skin but rather it is the name given to one who lives to please Allah Ta'ala. The signs of it being so is that the person becomes adorned with deeds and character which lead to His pleasure. Such a person undoubtedly is fit to be called a man. He has the contact of 'nisbat' within him. Nabi Adam's (Alaihis Salaam) special description is this that he uttered the cry:

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا اَنْفُسَنَا وَاِنْ لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِيْنَ

"O Our Lord, we have been unjust to our own selves. And if You do not forgive us and have Mercy on us, we shall be of the losers".

He cried so profusely his entire life that from the tears he shed, small fountains started flowing and from them fragrant flowers, roses and jasmine were created (as is mentioned in the Tafseer Maha-imy). Hence, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"Those people who are the special children of Adam, will like their father cry: Rabbanaa Zalamnaa, over their sins, begging His pardon".

Through this theory of Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) many an owner of huge mansions and motorcars but who do not possess the attributes of true servants of Allah Ta'ala, should pass Judgment over themselves as to whether they are in reality great men or small men. In fact, there is doubt as to whether they are men at all. Great men are those who please Allah Ta'ala. On the plain of the Reckoning, everyone will be brought to his correct level. If in this world, he was considered a great man, because he owned a mansion stretching over 2000 yards, or that he had three motorcars and was the owner of

three factories, of what avail will it be, when in the Hereafter he will be looked upon as if he was just a sweeper.

Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) once asked: "O people, do you know who is a great man?" He then informed them that a great man is one who is known as the "As-haabu-Layl " and "Hamalatul-Quran". That is, he is one of those who stand up during the night to recite Tahajjud prayers and secondly he is one of those who not only recite the Quran but also has made his life according to the teachings of the Quran. If he had been only a reciter of the Quran, Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) would have said "Hafathatul-Quran".

May Allah Ta'ala make us the true exponents of manhood and humanity, Ameen. And may He enter into us the correct relationship with our father, Hazrat Adam (Alaihis Salaam) and may He cause the true soul to enter our bodies, Ameen!

The Story of the Slave Who Did Not Come Out Of the Mosque

A rich man had a very religious-minded slave called Sanqar. One day this rich man and his slave were going somewhere. On the way, they passed a Musjid and heard the Azaan being called. Sanqar said to his master: "Please wait for me. I am going to perform Salaah." Sanqar went to the Musjid while his master, being overcome by his own pride and arrogance, went to sit down by a shop to wait for his slave. When the Imam and the congregation had performed the Salaah and recited the after-Salaah Wazeefa, and they came out, Sanqar remained in the mosque."

The master called out to him, "O Sanqar, why do you not come out? Who has kept you there in the Musjid?" Sanqar replied:"O proud one, the One who did not allow you to come in, is the One who now does not allow me to come out." Sanqar who was experiencing Allah Ta'ala nearness, being engaged in Zikr and prayers said "O Master! He, who is not allowing you

to come in, keeping you waiting for me outside by the shop, is not allowing me to come out of the Musjid."

Explanation

He whom Allah Ta'ala wishes to make His favorite, this is the sign thereof.

"He does not allow the fish to come out of the water
And He does not allow the earthly being to dwell in the water.
The origins of fish is in the water and the origins of earthly beings is the earth.
So how can water accept other than fish to dwell therein?
No deceit or contrivance can be useful.
The lock towards misguidance is solid. However the opener of the door to guidance is Allah Ta'ala.
Acquire the bounty of pleasure and submission for which humility and lamentation are required,
Through pride and contrivance this door is not opened.
If every atom of this world becomes a key
Still will the doors of guidance not be opened by anyone except Allah Ta'ala".

Lesson

In conclusion, the ability and guidance towards doing righteous deeds lies in the hands of Allah Ta'ala. This door is not opened through knowledge, planning and use of the intellect, or pride over these things. It is only acquired through Allah Ta'ala's bounty and Divine Mercy by lowering oneself before Allah Ta'ala by crying, begging and praying to Him.

The Story of Nabi Esa (Alaihis Salaam) fleeing from an insane person

Once Nabi Esa (Alaihis Salaam) was running towards the mountain. One of his followers shouted after him: "O Rasul of Allah Ta'ala! Whither are you going in this manner? What is the cause of your fear? I do not see any enemy following you". Nabi Esa (Alaihis Salaam) replied: "I am fleeing

from a fool. You go and do your own work. I desire to grant myself safety from the company of a fool. Do not interrupt my flight". The follower said:"O Messenger of Allah Ta'ala, are you not the Messiah through whom the blind and the deaf are healed of their ailments?" Hazrat Esa (Alaihis Salaam) replied: "The illness of foolishness is the wrath of Allah Ta'ala. To be blind is not a punishment, but a trial from Him. A trial is a sickness which brings Allah Ta'ala's Mercy while foolishness is such an ailment which brings wounds of His wrath.

Flee from fools and like Nabi Esa (Alaihis Salaam) prefer flight
The friendship of fools has caused much bloodshed
Both the blood of Deen and Dunya has flowed.

Just as air evaporates water slowly and gradually
So the fool takes away the light of your intelligence slowly and gradually.
Nabi Esa's (Alaihis Salaam) running away was not out of fear,
For through the Grace of Allah Ta'ala,
He was sinless and protected, but he fled in order to teach his Ummat a lesson.

Even if the whole world becomes covered with intense cold,
What sorrow will there be for the sun which shines brightly?"
(Even if the whole world becomes filled with stupid fools,
What harm could that do to Allah Ta'ala's Rasul?)

Lesson

This story teaches us to remain far removed from the company of fools. A fool in the technical language of the Quran is that person who jeers and scoffs at Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul and their injunctions. As Allah Ta'ala points out in the Quran:

أَلَآ إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ ٱلسُّفَهَآءُ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ

"Verily, they are the fools, but they know not (that they are fools)". (Para 1, Ruku 2)

Because of the unperceived foolishness, these people consider themselves to be the rational and knowledgeable thinkers and

philosophers of the era. However, the international definition of a rational being is one who keeps his eyes on the consequences of his actions. As such, they fail utterly; as they have no thoughts for what is to happen after death. Consequently, Allah Ta'ala describes them as follows:

يَعْلَمُوْنَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ

"They only know the pomp and splendor of this worldly life. And regarding the Hereafter, they are unmindful and neglectful".

So this world is the sum total of their knowledge and one should avoid their company. One should only meet with them if there is a need for it, just as it sometimes becomes necessary to visit a dirty toilet. In such a case, the person closes his nose and sits in it out of necessity. However, he does not allow his heart to be attracted to the toilet. Similarly, a person should not allow his heart to become attached to the dunya and the people of 'Dunya'.

"Live in this world like a ship on water,
Water causes the ship to sail,
As long as the water is outside the ship. But as soon as the water enters the ship, it is the cause of its destruction".

In similar way, one should keep the dunya beneath the Hereafter, as the main objective is to attain the Hereafter. Consider the world as helping hand towards the Hereafter. But, if the dunya becomes in your mind superior to the Hereafter and overwhelms it, then instead of hastening towards the Hereafter, it is hastening you to destruction. And if one does not check this, he will soon see the day of complete destruction. May Allah Ta'ala protect us from the company of foolish ones and from the love of this world overwhelming us.

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلِ الدُّنْيَا اَكْبَرَ هَمِّنَا وَلَا مَبْلَغَ عِلْمِنَا وَلَا غَايَةَ رَغْبَتِنَا وَلَا تُسَلِّطْ عَلَيْنَا مَنْ لَّا يَرْحَمُنَا

"O Allah Ta'ala, do not make this world our greatest objective. Make it not the sum total of our knowledge. Make it not the end of our desires. Place not rulers over us, who show no Mercy to us. (Hadith)

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ حُبَّكَ اَحَبَّ اِلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِيْ وَاَهْلِيْ وَمِنَ الْمَآءِ الْبَارِدِ

O Allah Ta'ala, make Your Love more beloved to me than myself, my family and cold water."(Hadith)

In the above dua'a, there is a special connection between the first few things asked and the last one. We ask Allah Ta'ala not to make this world our greatest object, and not to make it the sum total of our knowledge nor the end of our desires. If any of these things occur, then in reaction unmerciful ones will be granted rule over us. Hence, we ask Allah Ta'ala not to let this happen to us.

The Story of a Two-Month Old Baby Conversing With Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam)

Once a non-Muslim woman, with a two months old baby, came to Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) to test him. Before the mother could even put a question to him, the two-month-old baby spoke to Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) "O Messenger of Allah Ta'ala, peace be upon you! We have come into your presence."

The mother became angry and said to the baby: "Beware and remain silent! Who has put this testimony into your ears for you to utter?" The child replied: "O my mother, do you not see above your head? Look above your head and see. O mother, above your head is Angel Jibreel ((Alaihis Salaam). He is to me the embodiment of numerous proofs. Do you see him? Quickly say: Yes! There above your head is the angel like the moon in its fullness. The angel is teaching me the attributes of the Rasul. He is also protecting me and freeing me from the unclean

knowledge of Kufr and Shirk (disbelief and polytheism). Then Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) said: "O milk suckling baby, tell me what is your name? And obey my commands." The child replied: "My name in Allah Ta'ala's sight is Abdul Aziz. However, these disgraceful polytheists have named me Abdul Uzzah. But, I do not believe in the idol Uzza. I have no connection with him, through the blessings of that Being who sent you as a messenger. At that time, such a fragrance was released from paradise, which filled the minds of both mother and child. He whose guardian is Allah Ta'ala, even the birds and fishes will protect him". Along with the baby, the mother recited the Kalimah (creed of faith) and became a Muslim.

The Story of an Eagle Taking Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam)'s Socks

Once, Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) after performing wudhu was about to put on his leather socks when an eagle came along, took one of the socks in its mouth and flew away. Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) was quite surprised and distressed. However, after a short while, the eagle came back, turned the sock upside down and a black snake fell out. Then the eagle presented the sock to Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) and said:

"O Messenger of Allah, the reason for flying away with the sock was that a snake was hidden inside it. This was the cause of my insulting behavior. Allah Ta'ala ordered me to protect you; otherwise, I had no other duty than to be submissive and utterly respectful towards you." Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) expressed his gratitude to Allah Ta'ala and said: "The incident which I considered a sad affair was actually a case of loyalty and mercy.

O Eagle you carried my sock away and I became displeased
You made me sad and I considered it a case of grief".

The eagle replied:

"*O Beloved, for you this incident is a lesson of warning from Allah Ta'ala*
So that you may be pleased with every verdict of Allah Ta'ala
And consider it as a means of goodness.
And accept with pleasure from Allah Ta'ala if anything contrary to your wish takes place.

Anything, which outwardly appears to harm you by Divine verdict
You may be certain that it is for your welfare and good.

Should any calamity occur, do not become saddened
And be not grief-stricken when any loss occurs.
Because whatever calamity overtakes you wards off a greater calamity
And any loss is to ward off a greater loss".

The eagle said:

"While flying in the air, I saw the snake inside the sock.
This was not as a result of my own specialty.
No! It was a reflection of your own light and your own blessings.
And Allah Ta'ala in His wisdom kept the snake hidden from you to give a special lesson".

Lesson

The lesson in this story is that a person should not become impatient and unduly worried when a calamity comes. Instead, one should think that it has come to ward off a greater calamity. In other words, one should always pray for safety and make plans in that direction, but be patient over any calamity that comes his way from Allah Ta'ala. The thought that it has come to ward off greater calamity, is a consolation and eases the pain and suffering.

The Story of a King and His Beloved

Once a king went on a hunting trip. Along the way, he saw a young slave-girl and fell in love with her. He purchased her from her master and brought her back to the palace. (He went out hunting and himself became a victim!). This slave-girl had been in love with the son of a goldsmith of Samarqand. When she came to the king's palace, she started longing for him and felt-so much sorrow at being parted from him, that she started losing weight. She lost so much weight and became so weak that she became only skin and bones. The king himself seeing her suffering came near to death. He thus called many doctors to treat her and promised them various kinds of gifts and positions of honor if they could restore her to good health, saying: "Save my life, because if she should die, then just think that I too am dead."

The doctors without saying Insha-Allah Ta'ala promised that very soon they will bring the sick girl back to full health. However, their medication and treatment had the opposite effect upon her.

"When the verdict of sickness comes, the doctors too become fools.
And their medicines as a result, have the opposite effect.
Through destiny, the treatment was causing the sickness to increase
And almond oil caused an increase in dryness".
(In other words, every medicine had the opposite effect).

In the end, the doctors had to admit their failure because their claims of providing a cure for her sickness proved unsuccessful. "When the king saw the inability of the doctors and their disappointment, he walked towards the mosque with bare-feet. He went to the mosque, ran towards the pulpit, fell down in prostration and cried profusely. He wetted his place of prostration with his tears". He said, crying bitterly:

"***O Allah Ta'ala, all this universe is a mere speck of your creation. What can I say to You? You are aware of all our***

problems. Our lack of trust in You and the condition of these doctors who failed to say: 'Insha-Allah Ta'ala', is insignificant in the face of Your bountiful grace.

O You who are our Refuge in times of our needs
Again we have strayed from the straight path".

When the king cried and lamented before Allah Ta'ala with such sincerity and humility, the ocean of Allah Ta'ala's Mercy was stirred into action. Crying, the king fell asleep. In his dream, he saw a saintly man saying to him: "O king, do not lose hope. I shall treat your beloved back to health". When the king awoke he found himself very much happier. That saintly man, whom he had seen in the dream suddenly, appeared in front of him. The king welcomed him with due respect and honor. Thereafter, the saint checked the slave-girl's urine and checked her pulse. He put his hand on her pulse and mentioned the names of various towns. When he named Samarqand, the pulse rate became faster. He diagnosed from this that the sickness she had was because of her love for someone in Samarqand and not what the doctors thought.

"***People were unaware of the secrets of the inner self***
I seek refuge in Allah Ta'ala from what they fabricate".

When the Shaikh came to know the secret of the girl's sickness, that she was in love with the son of a goldsmith of Samarqand, the Shaikh ordered the king to call him over, bribing him with wealth. The Shaikh being a good physician gave the young man medicines, which caused him to lose his handsome appearance. Then again, he was presented before the girl.When she saw him, her love for him evaporated because his outward form had changed so drastically that it created an aversion in her. The girl was released of her love for him and became well and healthy. Within a few days, she completely recovered.

"Because the girl's love was a mere worship of outward form,
Hence, through changing of that form, gradually the love disappeared and she was healed.

The love that is merely a result of color and complexion is not love at all
It is in fact evil and it ends only in shame and disgrace.

For the love of a dying one is not lasting
Because the dying are not coming to us but are rather departing.
(So when the beloved passes away, this love also passes away).
Allah Ta'ala, who is Everlasting and free from passing away.
Also His Love is fresher than a newly-formed rose-bud.

O Seeker, choose the love of the Living One, Who remains forever,
And Who grants love and knowledge, Who gives you to drink of the most animating drink.
And say not in hopeless fashion: How can unfit ones like myself ever reach up to that Beloved.
For He is a Generous One, and for the generous that is not difficult".

(It is not difficult as the Hadith teaches us. He who draws near to Me the length of a palm, I draw near to him one yard. In other words, His door is open at all times. Whosoever wishes may enter and acquire His nearness).

Lesson

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says that this story is applicable to all of us according to our individual conditions. The soul is made a king over our 'Nafs', so that the Nafs can be made to function in accordance with the will of Allah Ta'ala and thereby enter paradise. But the Nafs which is a servant of the soul, is inclined towards the desires of the world, and therefore, it disobeys the soul. Moreover, generally the physicians of our environment are incompetent and unable to treat this sickness. For this reason, there is need for a Shaikh (Spiritual Guide) whose carefully prescribed remedy makes sinful worldly pleasures appear ugly in our eyes, so that the 'Nafs' may obey the Soul. In other words, the 'Nafs' will then find it easy to walk on the path of Divine pleasure.

The Treatment for Evil and Figurative Love

(By Hazrat Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb
(Damat Barakaatuhum)

O God of this Universe, God of Beauty and Love
A great trial for men is figurative beauty and love

If love is felt for others save You (i.e. illicit love)
Then that is not love but in fact is inequity.

That love can prove to be Your punishment,
And can be a hindrance on Your path.

For this reason the command is given: "Cast down your gaze,"
So that the heart can be without damage from the poison of love.

Don't ever consider looking at evil as a minor sin,
It destroys the heart quickly.

Looking at evil is like an arrow from Iblees.
It is deception drowned in poison.

How many have been destroyed in this path?
How many have lost the way in the path of this desire?

They have lost in this way their whole life
The value of their lives is just remembrance of a beloved.

This figurative beauty only lasts for limited number of days
It is only for a couple of days that the conspiracy lasts

The love that is of color and complexion
Is like the lover of the sun during the day.

On the Day of Judgment they and their lovers
Will be before Allah Ta'ala with blackened souls.

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says
Figurative, perishable love is everlasting punishment.

If the heart desires anyone other than Allah Ta'ala,
This is intoxication from the wine of Allah Ta'ala's punishment.

If a soul should turn from figurative to true love,
then that soul will be endowed with purity.

He has then become alive, rising from the graveyard
From a thorny world has he entered the rose-garden.

From the thorns, he has turned his attention away,
Now with the heart he sees the truly beloved.

Through remembrance of Allah Ta'ala, he who has found peaceful tranquility,
For him even Autumn will be Springtime.

Light has come and the fires of lustful desires are extinguished,
As if Autumn has changed into Spring.

Hardhearted and merciless is this one,
Selfish and faithless this delicate one.

Of bad habits and ugly disposition
Of a certainty, it is an idol that appears beautiful.

When the love of other than Allah Ta'ala shall leave the heart
There will be tranquility and ecstasy of Springtime.

In this life will then be the rising of the sun
And the opening of the door towards the good life. .

Smoke was the curtain of the lamp of the dead
Greatly jealous was the light of the sun.

When there was in the heart the thorns of love of other than Allah Ta'ala
Therein dwelled darkness and distress.

Alas what will see of the sights of Spring
One who is not occupied with remembrance and thoughts of the Beloved?

The Saqi (Allah Ta'ala) will keep him thirsty life long
If he has drunk from the poisonous cup of evil glances.

When the heart is busy with the thoughts of others
How can it experience pleasure in obedience and Zikr?

The heart of yours is occupied with thoughts at every moment
Thus the Light of Life does not come into it.

Oh Lord, if You so wish, You can cleanse me of all evils,
Through Your Grace.
For You this is no difficult task.

That I may remain Yours in love
That I may mention Your Holy Name in heartfelt pain.

That whosoever of men may hear my sighs
Will become agitated in love for You.

Oh Lord, fill Akhtar's heart with Your love
And make my heart inhabited with Noor".

The Story of a Woman Crying Before Allah Ta'ala over the Loss of Her Children

Once there was a woman whose children used to die in infancy. All of them after six months would become sick and die. In this manner, twenty of her children died and went to the graveyard.

"Twenty children, one after the other, went that way
And this caused great sorrow to rise up in her".

During the latter part of the night, she rose up from her bed and fell down in prostration before her Lord, crying bitterly in sorrow as she poured out her heart in supplication. Thereafter, she went to sleep, she saw in a dream, herself wandering around in paradise. She also saw a most beautiful mansion on which her name was written. From the beauty of the gardens of paradise and its splendor, she became besides herself with pleasure.

The angels told her:

"O Woman, generally these bounties from Allah Ta'ala are acquired through the performance of worship and strenuous spiritual strivings. But because you were inactive in that respect and thus unable to reach that position, Allah Ta'ala sent those difficulties to you in the world, during which you were patient.

In return for that patience, He granted you this paradise and this mansion."

Then she saw her children there in paradise. She said: "O Lord! Children of mine were concealed from my sight, but they were never hidden from You. Here they are all present. O Lord, if for a thousand years you keep me as I am today, I have no regret. Even if, You should shed my blood, I will be satisfied, for these favors are much more than my patience".

The Story of a Child Being Thrown into the Fire in the Presence of His Mother

A Jewish king told a woman: "Prostrate before this idol otherwise you will be cast into a burning fire". She refused to prostrate before the idol and remained steadfast on her faith and on Tauheed. The king then snatched the baby from her arms and threw it into the fire. The mother was greatly distressed at this and her faith was greatly tested by the event. She came very near to death out of anxiety. But suddenly the little baby started speaking from out of the midst of the fire:

"I am alive and I have not died in this fire.
O Mother! Come into this fire. I am in great pleasure, even though it appears I am in a flaming fire.
O Mother! Come into this fire so that you too may see Allah Ta'ala's miracle and so that you too can feel the comfort and ease of Allah Ta'ala's special bondsmen

Even though in the eyes of the world they are in calamity.
O Mother, come in, so that you too can see how the fire of Namrud became like a bed of roses for Ibrahim.
And how in the fire he found a springtime of roses and jasmine.

At the time you gave birth to me,
I feared it was death to me.

But when I was born I was released from a very narrow world
And in my opinion, I had entered a beautiful world.

However after seeing paradise this world would appear small and narrow like the mother's stomach.

In this fire, I have seen another world
Whose every atom is a gift of life.

O Mother, come inside for the sake of your motherhood
Come in and see that this fire has not the effect of fire,

For the Mercy of Allah Ta'ala has converted it into a garden.
O Mother, you have seen the power of the Jewish dog,
Now come in so that you may witness the power of Allah Ta'ala's grace.

O Mother, come inside and call others also to come,
Because my Lord had spread the tablecloth of His kindness inside.

O Muslims, come inside all of you and experience
The sweetness of Deen, which is sweeter than all other worldly pleasures".

The mother then threw herself into fire and the baby held her by the arm. Then all the people around there jumped into the fire and experienced the grace of Allah Ta'ala.

The Jewish king became ashamed and embarrassed. His plan proved to be against himself, because people began to long to Jump into the fire and in sacrificing their bodies, they proved to be true in faith. Whatever signs of insult or disgrace unworthy ones try to put on the faces of saintly ones, these signs of disgrace will get stuck upon their own faces.

The Jewish king then addressed the fire: "What is wrong with you? You refuse to show mercy to those who worship you, and grant refuge and safety to these sons of Tauheed, while causing me disgrace and embarrassment. Who has practiced sorcery upon you? What is this? What has happened to your specialty of burning?"

The fire replied: "O you disbeliever, I am that same fire. You come to me so that you may taste that same burning heat. My temperament and my true reality have not changed. I am a

sword of Allah Ta'ala but only cut with permission from Him. For this reason, when you feel grief and sorrow, beg His forgiveness from sins committed, because sorrow only comes through His command. When through the blessings of seeking pardon, Allah Ta'ala becomes pleased, He will remove punishment. And when the command of Allah Ta'ala comes, sorrow also becomes pleasurable and a prisoner is released.
Air, sand, water and fire are all slaves of Allah Ta'ala, even though lifeless they may be. But in Allah Ta'ala's sight they are alive and for them to carry out His commands is not far-fetched at all."

The Story of the Wind's Destruction of the People of Nabi Hood (Alaihis Salaam)

It is related that when a strong wind was sent against the people of Nabi Hood (Alaihis Salaam), Nabi Hood (Alaihis Salaam) drew a circle around those who believed in him. When the wind reached that circle, it blew softly and gently. People who were outside the line were torn to pieces by the wind. In a similar fashion, Hazrat Shaybaan Raa'ee (Rahmatullah Alaihe) used to draw a circle around his flock of sheep when he went for Jumaa Salaah so that no wolf could carry off any sheep while he was away. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"In this fashion over the Saints of Allah Ta'ala the wind of death blows like the morning garden breeze, soft and pleasant.

The fire did not burn Nabi Ibrahim (Alaihis Salaam) when he was a chosen friend of Allah Ta'ala. Now at the time of passing away how would the fire have the courage to cause him harm?

Similarly, the fire of desires and lust cannot burn the true followers of the Deen, but it causes the irreligious ones to be brought to hell-fire".

The Story of a Mosquito Complaining To Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam)

A mosquito came before Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) with its complaint. He said: "O you, whose kingdom stretches over men and jinn and over the air. Please eradicate my misfortune and judge for me in justice".
Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) asked: "O you who searches for justice, against whom do you require a just verdict?"
The mosquito replied: "My complaint is against the wind. It causes me great grief and harm. When I try to suck blood, the wind blows me away. This is unjust and unfair". Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) said: "O Mosquito, Allah Ta'ala has commanded me not to give Judgment until both parties to a dispute are present and given a fair hearing." The Mosquito replied: "Undoubtedly that is the right thing".

Then Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) summoned the wind to appear before him quickly because a complaint of injustice had been lodged against him. As soon as the wind received the summons, it came along blowing quite strongly as it hastened to the presence of Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam). As soon as the strong wind arrived, involuntarily it forced the mosquito to be blown away. Nabi Sulaiman (Alaihis Salaam) called upon him: "O Mosquito, wait a while". O Mosquito, where are you going, wait! I shall now judge between the two of you." The Mosquito replied:"O king, my death lies in the existence of the wind. Its smoke makes my day black indeed. When the wind comes, I experience no ease and comfort. It destroys me, by tearing me away from my place". Now Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) gives advice to the seekers after the Sufi way. He says: Similar is the case of the seeker after Allah Ta'ala. When he has attained some nearness to Him, the closeness of Allah Ta'ala will cause his fleeing from evil. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says that for the nearness of Allah Ta'ala to be properly attained, it is necessary that one should become fully engrossed in serving Him and be

completely annihilated in Him. That is the sign of being truly endowed with Allah Ta'ala's nearness. Hence, for as long as a person's 'Nafs' is alive and still has arrogance in it, it is impossible to acquire nearness to Allah Ta'ala. One will have to destroy his ego.

"Even though in nearness to Allah Ta'ala, there is lasting existence,
But before this lasting existence, annihilation of the self is required".

By 'annihilation' is meant to make your desires subject to the Divine wishes and to make them a slave of Allah Ta'ala, surrender to Him completely. How can that person be a servant of Allah Ta'ala, when he wants to keep his wishes above those of Allah Ta'ala?

Lesson

This story teaches us that only after one has annihilated his 'Nafs' will he be honored with sainthood. This annihilation is dependent upon the company of a saintly one, as Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) has said elsewhere:

"A Nafs cannot be annihilated unless one has the shadow of a spiritual guide's guidance.
Hence hold fast onto the cloth of such a destroyer of Nafs".

My Shaikh and Murshid (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says that here the phrase says: "Hold fast onto." The reason for exhorting us to hold fast onto the spiritual guide is that sometimes the Shaikh may reprimand or punish a 'Mureed' to correct him. At such times, if one is loosely connected with him, he will become offended and run away from him, which will be to his own detriment. As Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) states,

"If at every rebuke of the Shaikh you become fed up,
Then how without rubbing can you become clean as a mirror?"

The Story of the Mourning Tree

Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) initially used to lean upon the trunk of a date palm while delivering the sermon in the mosque in Madina. Later, when the tree was cut to make way for the construction of a solid pulpit, the date palm trunk began to cry out aloud like a child cries on being parted from its mother. It was deeply grieved that Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) would no longer lean against it. Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) refers to the crying and mourning in these lines:

"Due to separation from Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam), the pillar of mourning began crying bitterly just like a rational human being.
Through this crying, the companions were surprised and astounded that this wooden trunk in all its length and width was crying so bitterly.

Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) asked: O pillar, what is it you desire? It replied:

O Rasul of Allah, the sorrow of being separated from you is turning my life to blood.

Your separation is causing life to be burnt up inside me. Thus, why should I not cry and lament, after all, you are the life of the universe.

I used to be your leaning place, now you have parted from me and instead have chosen another sitting place".

Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) replied: "O Blessed pillar, do you wish that I pray to Allah Ta'ala that you remain a green and fruitful tree and that everyone of the East and of the West should derive benefit from eating your fruits. On the other hand, do you desire something of the Hereafter and to always remain green and fresh?" The mourning pillar replied: "O Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam), I desire everlasting bounty from Allah Ta'ala".

Now Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) gives advice: "O you unmindful and negligent ones, listen! You should take a lesson from the piece of wood. You, being human, are attracted to this temporary world and turn your back upon the Hereafter, whereas that mourning trunk is giving preference to the everlasting bounties, over temporary and passing pleasures."

"***Thereafter the wooden pillar of mourning was buried under the earth***
So that like mankind it will be raised up on the day of resurrection for its reward".

Note: The crying of this trunk of wood was one of the miracles of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam)

The Story of the Miracle of the Pebbles

Once Abu Jahl had some gravel pebbles hidden in his hand. He asked Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) "If you are truly Allah Ta'ala's Messenger, tell me what I have in my hand? You inform people of things from beyond the heavens, therefore it should be easy for you to tell me what is in my hand". Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) replied: "Shall I inform you of what is in your hand, or should the things in your hand themselves tell you who I am?"
Abu Jahl retorted: "I would like both things". Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam) said: "There are six pebbles in your hand". Then at the command of Rasulullah (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam), everyone of the pebbles began to recite the Kalima Shahaadah. When Abu Jahl saw this miracle, he angrily threw the pebbles on the ground and turned to go home.

May his head remain covered in dust. The accursed one remained blind to the truth and his eyes were like those of the accursed Iblees who saw Nabi Adam (Alaihis Salaam) as mere being created of dust. He could not see the soul which was crowned within the "crown of Prophethood" of which he was completely unaware.

The Story of the Person Crying Over His Dog

Once, a dog was dying of hunger. Its owner was sitting beside it and busy crying over the dying of the animal. Someone saw this and asked him: "Why are you crying?" He replied: "This dog had some very beautiful qualities. Now it is dying of hunger and starvation ". The man inquired: "Tell me, what have you got in that basket which you are carrying on your head?" He replied: "I have bread in it as food for my journey". The man inquired: "O you unjust one, why do you not feed the dog from it?" He replied: "My love for this dog is not that much that I should feed him of my bread. Bread is not acquired without payment, while the tears I shed in sorrow are acquired free of charge". The passer by replied: "May your head be covered in dust, that in your sight a piece of bread is better than tears.

Tears are blood which through sorrow and grief turn to water.

So, a foolish one, how can blood be equal in value to dust?"

(Here bread is referred to as dust because wheat grows from the earth).

From this, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) gives advice: "I am a bondsman of such a high-minded Shaikh, Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), who would not exchange his existence for the world's greatest wealth and kingdom. This spiritual guide of mine will only exchange his body and soul for the acquisition of Divine Love." Hence, one should become servants of the true Walis of Allah Ta'ala those who are filled with the spirit of Allah Ta'ala. If we become slaves of a worldly one, the same fate awaits us as that of the dog, for whom two tears of hypocrisy were shed which proved to be of no use. People attached to material things cannot have ambitions, because they are connected to dust. The saints of Allah Ta'ala, because they are connected to Allah Ta'ala, His Throne and to the heavens, their spirit and ambition is higher than heavenly bodies. This is the special meaning of the verse Allah Ta'ala has

inspired this humble servant with. All praise be to Allah Ta'ala for that I say this and in it there is no boasting.
Then Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:
"O people, you have seen one type of tears which are less in value than bread. Now, look at another type of tears: See the tears of the Saints. When my spiritual guide Hazrat Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) cries, the effect of his sincerity and his pain causes the very heavens to cry also. And when my Shaikh cries out of His Great Divine Love, the very heavenly bodies tremble and shake, crying aloud: Ya Rabb, Ya Rabb! (O our Lord) Our Shams Tabrezi prays in great humility and earnestness. The Grace of Allah Ta'ala comes flying towards broken hearts, which have presented their complaints before Him and grants them the honor of acceptance."

The Story of Ayaaz and those Who Were Jealous of Him

Ayaaz, one of the close courtiers of king Mahmood, built a room in which he kept his old leather jacket, other torn and tattered clothing which he wore before becoming a servant of the king. He used to keep the room locked at all times. Occasionally, he used to enter this room alone. Then, looking at his torn and tattered clothes and his leather coat, he used to cry thus, "O Allah, I am a son of a very poor person. I used to be in this torn and tattered state. This was my clothing of which today I am so ashamed that I keep it locked up. Not only will I not wear it in the presence of others, but I feel ashamed to even show it to them. In fact, now I consider it an insult to let others come to know of them." Then he used to address himself, "O Ayaaz, today you are a close courtier of the king. Do not be arrogant and proud of the shine and splendor you enjoy. For in reality you are like these tattered clothes."

The other courtiers and ministers of the king did not know what was in the room. Seeing him entering and leaving

this room, they started forming all kinds of opinions and ideas about the room and its contents.

One day, all the king's courtiers gathered in one place. They exchanged ideas as to why Ayaaz went into this room alone and why he kept the room locked at all times? The king loved him and considered him a saintly person. They thought that Ayaaz was stealing the king's wealth and hiding it in that room. They thought that if the king was to be informed of the treasure that was being kept in the room, then upon its discovery, Ayaaz would lose his position of nearness to the king. Secondly, if the king was to find the treasure, he would reward his informers. Hence, the result of their mutual consultation was that king Mahmood should be informed of their suspicions. A delegation from among them went to the king and told him: "The court officials told the king that Ayaaz has a room in which is hidden gold, silver and carpets. He does not permit anybody else to enter into it and keeps the room locked at all times."

The king listened to them and said: "At midnight, I am going to inspect that room. You all should remain with me during the inspection. Whatever wealth we shall find therein will be divided amongst you people.”

The king further said:

"Sorrow upon Ayaaz that in spite of so much respect and honor that he enjoys from us, he should involve himself in such a despicable act, as to hoard gold and silver in secret. Whoever has discovered the life of Divine Love, for him it is ingratitude to become involved with beings other than Allah Ta’ala.”

The king was quite convinced of the sincere love which Ayaaz had for him and had full confidence in his honesty. However, he was actually jeering at the courtiers and making a fool of them. The king had no mistrust of Ayaaz. He only tested the court officials and played the fool with the jealous ones. It was impossible that Ayaaz could be untrue to the king because his faithfulness was unlimited. Ayaaz was a king among kings; in fact, he was a king in the making and it was only for protection from an evil eye that he was called Ayaaz. King

Mahmood was aware of his innocence and purity of life and only to rectify those who envied him, he decided to inspect."

In the middle of the night, the room was opened. When the court officials could not find anything, they said: "The treasure must be under the ground. Hence, the floor of the room was dug up, but still they found nothing."

"Everybody was quite surprised and distressed as to what excuse to give before the king and worried as to how they were going to save themselves from their false accusations. Finally, in despair, they bit their hands and lips and like women they put their hands on their heads in shame". They all came before the king and said: "Whatever punishment you wish to meet out to us, we are prepared to accept. We deserve such punishment. But if you pardon us, (it will be good) for you are king of Grace.

The king said: "Whatever Judgment or verdict Ayaaz will give, that will be our Judgment, because you people have tried to defame him and his good name and honor. Therefore, I shall not pass any Judgment". .

He said further:

"O Ayaaz, please pass Judgment on these evil-mongers for you were innocent of their accusations and completely loyal.

O Ayaaz, from your test and trial numerous people are ashamed and full of grief".

Now listen to Ayaaz's good fortune, his annihilated self and his morals of love.

Ayaaz said:

"O king! All sovereignty and rule is fitting for you,
It is your kindness that this honor Ayaaz enjoys
I am a mere slave. How can a star show its light in the presence of the sun?
Whether its Venus, or Mercury or whether it is a shooting star
How can any of these show their existence in the presence of the Sun?"

The king, hearing this, became quite pleased. He replied:

"O Ayaaz, your high-mindedness has caused serfdom to be granted light and your light has speedily moved from down here to the stars. O Ayaaz, your bondage has reached that rank which is the envy of freedom, for you have done your duty to bondage and acquired the true life." To this Ayaaz replied: "This high-mindedness is your gift and the result of the blessings of your company otherwise, I am that slave of lowly rank who initially appeared before you in tattered clothes and leather jacket. O You listener, your tattered clothing is a clot of blood and your leather jacket is the blood of menstruation. Apart from that everything else you possess is a gift from Allah Ta'ala."

Lesson

In this story, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) is teaching the lesson of annihilation of the self. Ayaaz was granted many favors by the king. In spite of that honor, in order to save himself from arrogance and pride, he used to go and see his tattered clothing and his old leather jacket and used to advise himself: "O Ayaaz, this is your reality. Be not proud of your position of nearness to the king". In the same way, the seekers after the Sufi path and the seekers of Allah Ta'ala should at all time keep their reality in front of their eyes.

They should remember their humble beginnings as Allah Ta'ala reminds us:

"We have created man from a clot". The origin of man is that he is created from the father's sperm and the mother's blood of menstruation. Apart from that, all man's inner and outer gifts are bounties from Allah Ta'ala.

No matter what high rank Allah Ta'ala grants any man, the fact still remains that he is created from the sperm of his father and the menstrual blood of his mother. The mere thought of this should be a protection and salvation against arrogance. Man should at all times keep this thought in mind, that he was created in the womb of his mother. Then he was granted sight, hearing, reason and understanding. Who was the one who granted these gifts?

Once a saintly man was crossing the road. He happened to accidentally bumped against an arrogant, proud person. This was because the saintly man, due to his old age, was weak in eyesight. The arrogant one proudly asked him: "O blind one, can you not see? Do you not know who I am?"

The saintly man replied: "I know full well who you are. If you want, I shall explain to you".

He said: "All right, tell me". The saintly man said: "Life consists of three times: Past, present and future. As for the past, you were your father's unclean sperm mixed with the menstrual blood of your mother. As for the present, your abdomen contains feces and is filled with urine. And as for the future, you will be a stinking rotten corpse that will be buried in the graveyard."

Pride and arrogance is quite common amongst the foolish. But if one uses his reason, he will discover that arrogance is definitely not befitting man. In a Hadith Qudsi, Allah Ta'ala proclaims: "Pride is My Covering. Whosoever enters into it, I shall break his neck."

The Difference between Ujub and Takabbur (Conceit and Arrogance)

Conceit (Ujub) is focusing on some specific quality in oneself and instead of considering it a gift from Allah Ta'ala, one looks upon it as a personal virtue. Because of 'Ujub', one does not express gratitude and thanks to Allah Ta'ala for it, but rather brags about oneself exclaiming: "I am like this or that". Consequently, he does not see the giver of the bounty and gifts i.e. Allah Ta'ala. Hence, in his heart he considers himself as worthy of praise.

Takabbur (pride) means to consider oneself greater in comparison to others. Hence, in the concept of takabbur, a necessary element, is to consider others as being contemptible and lowly, whereas in 'Ujub' it is not necessary that the person considers himself superior to another.

The difference between a conceited person and a proud person is that every proud person has conceit in him, for when he admires his own qualities and considers himself better than someone else, then he is bound to consider another person as being despicable and low. However, it is not necessary that every conceited one be a proud person; because a person may look at a special quality of his and consider himself great without any thoughts of belittling others or considering them inferior. Allah Ta'ala has given this humble understanding of this subtle difference. All Praise to Allah Ta'ala for it. And in this there is no boasting.

Of the many diseases of the heart, both self-admiration (Ujub) and pride are fatal diseases for the seekers of Allah Ta'ala. They should never be negligent in treating these ailments. Let us understand the harm of these ailments by looking at the following example.

A lover has a great longing to meet his beloved. However, when meeting his beloved, he foolishly takes out a mirror from his pocket and instead of looking at his beloved, continues looking at himself, admiring his own form and beauty. Is this person not to be considered a hypocrite in his claim of love and is he not depriving himself?

Similarly, the seekers after the Sufi path should think that Allah Ta'ala is at all times directing His Grace and bounties towards His servants. Now, if the servant, instead of directing himself towards Allah Ta'ala and His attributes, foolishly becomes engaged in admiring his own borrowed attributes (from Allah Ta'ala), then is this not hypocrisy in his claim of love for Allah Ta'ala and is this not a sign of being deprived of good?

You, yourself, can Judge. You yourself may measure and gauge the amount of harm they cause. From the above example, the harmful nature of both 'Ujub' and 'Takabbur' is clearly understood. And it serves as a clear warning for all seekers of the Love of Allah Ta'ala.

"O Allah Ta'ala, protect us against the sickness of conceit, pride and all other deadly spiritual and physical illnesses." Ameen.

It is through the blessing of the company of my Shaikh that these examples and this knowledge is granted to me. All Praise to Allah Ta'ala! All Thanks to Allah Ta'ala! O Our Lord, O Allah Ta'ala, grant us the ability to work righteous deeds. O You Helper of those seeking help, guide us. There is no boasting over knowledge and riches.

The Story of One Who Considered Himself Forced

A certain person of incorrect belief claimed that man is a forced being and does not have a choice in any matter. He cannot exercise his will. Hence, he concluded that all his actions were due to destiny and were forced upon him. Consequently, he was not responsible and accountable for his actions. One day he entered an orchard and without permission, started picking fruit from the trees and ate it. The owner of the orchard came along and shouted at him:

"O you wicked thief! What are you doing?" He replied: "This orchard belongs to Allah Ta'ala. I am a bondsman of His. I am only eating of His gifts, so what sin is in it?"

The owner of the orchard took hold of him, tied him to a tree with a rope and started to beat him over his back with a thick stick. The thief explained: "O you unjust one, why do you persecute an innocent one in this evil manner? Have shame before Allah Ta'ala!" The owner of the orchard replied: "This stick is Allah Ta'ala's and I am His slave, who is busy beating another. I have no choice. I am forced to beat you and so is my stick and remember everything that occurs, is done by Allah Ta'ala."

The thief replied:

"I repent to Allah Ta'ala for this wrong belief of being forced. There is no doubt a choice, there is a choice, and there is a choice."

Lesson

Once a man came to Hazrat Ali and asked: "Is man forced or not?" (Meaning does he have a choice in his actions or not). Hazrat Ali told him: "Lift up one of your legs!" The man lifted his leg. Then he said: "Now lift up the other one". He asked: "How can both legs be lifted up?" Hazrat Ali replied: "Well, that is the answer to your question. Man is half forced and half free". We should continue to beg of Allah Ta'ala the ability and Divine guidance to do righteous deeds and beg Him to grant us proper understanding. The end result of some sins and the punishment, is that ones intelligence becomes defective. The punishment of being transformed to animals has been lifted from this Ummat, while the punishment of the reason becoming so affected that we behave like animals, may still descend upon us.

May Allah Ta'ala bestow us with correct understanding and the light of reason. May He protect us from the punishment of being changed in heart and reasoning to that of lower beings. The experience of the saintly ones shows that whosoever stays in their company and performs Zikrullah punctually, is protected from the punishment of defective reasoning and intellect, causing one to behave worse than animals.

The Story of a Man with a Lion Tattoo on His Arm

During the days of ignorance, people had the habit of having pictures of lions and panthers tattooed upon their arms. In this way, one of them told a tattooist: "Draw a lion on my arm". When the artist heated up the tattooing needle and placed it on his arm, he felt such pain that he shrieked: "What are you drawing?" The tattooist replied: "I am drawing the tail of the lion."

He replied: "But, cannot you draw a lion without a tail." The tattooist again heated the needle in the fire and then placed it upon his skin. Again he gave a loud cry, saying: "What are you drawing now?" He replied: "I am drawing the lion's ear." He

said: "But a lion can be without ears also." Once again, the drawer placed the needle in the fire to heat it and then placed it upon his skin. Again he gave a loud cry, saying: "What are you drawing now?" He replied: "I am drawing the stomach of the lion." He said: "Leave that out. Draw a lion without a stomach." Thereafter, he even refused the drawing of the lion's head. Then the tattooist in anger and greatly irritated, threw down the needle and said: "Go away from me! Who has ever seen a lion without head, a tail and a stomach. Such a lion has never yet been created by God. O you! when you are unable to bear the pain, then do not speak about tattooing such a lion on your arm."

"O Brother, bear the harshness of the teacher's or spiritual guide's training, so that you may find safety from the dictates of the self and be saved from blasphemy and iniquity. If you desire to be enlightened and shining like the day, then annihilate your 'self' like the night after day."

(In other words: If you reform the' self' through eliminating the evil dictates of the 'self' at the hands of a spiritual guide, because of which the darkness of your inner self will disappear and you will discover that your life through the light of contact with Allah Ta'ala will become enlightened).

"Like the saints; acquire freedom from your 'self.'
For after such spiritual efforts such nearness is achieved,
That the light of the sun, moon and stars becomes a slave to the inner light.

O You listener, if you experience the splendor of Allah Ta'ala's nearness within yourself
The whole world will appear ugly and worthless before His Noor."

Lesson

The drawing of pictures is prohibited in Islam, but here Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) tells a story of the Days of ignorance. By it, he informs the seekers after the Sufi path, that

if the Spiritual Guide, who is a follower of the Sunnah, should for the sake of their rectification resort to some harshness, then every rebuke should be tolerated and accepted with pleasure. Through such rectification, there will be the flowering of righteous deeds and praiseworthy morals and manners.

"If every rebuke of the Shaikh is going to cause you to grudge,
Then how can you become clean as a mirror without rubbing?"

These spiritual exercises and efforts are only for a limited number of days. Thereafter, only comfort follows.

The Story of the Snake in the City Of Baghdad

A snake catcher once went to the mountains, which were covered with snow. Due to the snow and cold, many very big snakes lay motionless as if they were dead.

"The snake-catcher saw a dead snake
In the extreme cold of winter.
He picked it up and took it to Baghdad,
With the purpose of using it for a show.
The snake like a pillar was long,
Which the snake-catcher dragged along to earn his livelihood.
The snake-catcher thought it was dead, while in fact it was alive.
Through the cold, it appeared to be lifeless, but he knew not.
The snake-catcher told the spectators of the show: I have brought this snake to you, which I killed,
And in hunting it I spent extreme diligence and had to sweat blood."

Maulana Rumi says:

"He dragged the snake along to Baghdad, advertising it as he went along bragging about his bravery. A large crowd gathered around as the news quickly spread.
That the snake-catcher had brought a very big snake.

A most rare thing, which is most astonishing.
Numerous inexperienced and foolish ones gathered around
And all of them were caught in the net of the snake-catcher."

In the morning when the sun rose in the sky and the sun's rays heated the snake, the coldness of its body disappeared. Gradually, the signs of life came back into its body.

The heat of the sun brought the signs of life into it
And the coldness departed from its organs.
Then the snake which was dead came alive
And started making movements.
The people, seeing the movements of the dead snake, were astonished
And these movements became for them a cause of great astonishment.
The spectators in astonishment shouted
And all of them fled in various directions."

When the snake began to move about like a fierce lion, people fled so wildly that they struck against each other and were injured. The snake-catcher was himself petrified with fear. Here Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) instructs us: "O you seekers after the Sufi path, it may appear that the Nafs, not being involved in sins, is dead. However, one is never certain as to how it will react when left alone with a strange woman, or a beardless handsome young boy.

"If the Nafs like Fir'aun should find means of comfort and power, your Nafs will like Fir'aun's become rebellious
And begin to commit sins and will begin to fight against callers towards the truth."

Lesson

In this story, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) gives a very important lesson for the Seekers after the Sufi path. He says: "Never be completely sure about the state of your 'Nafs". In its natural state it is inclined towards evil. Even if, through the company of a Shaikh and lifelong spiritual exercises and

efforts the "Nafs" appear to have changed towards good; never become unmindful of it. Do not become negligent in taking precautions. Be not like some foolish Sufis, who for a long time through the efforts of Zikr and other spiritual vigils seen their 'Nafs' having become accustomed to subjugation, so carelessly become at ease and unmindful of its dangers. Consequently, they start mixing with strange women and beardless handsome, young men, thinking that the desire to commit sins will not overpower them. Hence, why should one not look at those women and young men with pure intentions. They did just that and how tragic was the result? They became disgraced in a bad way. The 'Nafs' which appeared controlled and dead, became alive. And the looks which were supposed to be "pure looks" turned out to be dirty and prohibited looks.

In the end, the snake of the 'Nafs' bit them and from the path of truth they were rejected and became disgraced. For this reason, our elders have stated that no matter how old the Muttaqi may be, one should up to his death not be negligent of taking precautions against the Nafs. Hazrat Majzoob (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says:

"Have no trust in this Nafs, O devout, one!
Even if it becomes an angel, remain distrustful of it.
Look at the snake of your Nafs
As soon as you are negligent here, it bites there."

A dog, no matter how trained it becomes, do not take the chain off its neck, or let it become slack. A trained dog will remain a dog. Do not remove the chain from its neck.
May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Divine Guidance to remain watchful over our 'Nafs' up to our last breath on this earth.

Towards Following a Saintly Spiritual Guide

"Allah Ta'ala's special servants - these saintly spiritual guides - are Allah Ta'ala's shadows on earth.
They are dead as far as with this world is concerned.
And alive with regard to contact with Him.

Grab hold of the cloth of spiritual guide quickly and without hesitation
So that you may be saved from the calamities of the latter days.

Tread not this path of Sufism without a spiritual guide,
Be like Ibrahim who said: 'I love not those who pass away'
And be not attracted to others except Allah Ta'ala.
Go and through the tawassul of the shadow of Allah Ta'ala on earth
Meet the Sun of Truth
And hold onto the cloth of Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe)."

(At this stage Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe), having turned towards the discussion on spiritual guide, his mind involuntarily goes to his Shaikh, Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and now he mentions his name with great love).

"If you do not know the way to the enlightened and blessed gatherings of Shams Tabrezi,
Then ask Ziya-ul-Haq, Husamuddin to show you the way."

Ziya-ul-Haq is the nickname and Husamuddin (Rahmatullah Alaihe) is the name of Maulana Rumi's (Rahmatullah Alaihe) Khaleefa-i-A'zam. Initially, he acquired spiritual benefit from Shams Tabrezi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) and later became attached to Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) from whom he derived much spiritual benefit.

"And if along the way in search of a Murshid, jealousy should come between you and your aim and jealousy begins to squeeze your throat, then remember that in the field of jealousy Iblees has made more progress than you."

It is possible that Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) might have mentioned this thought in the gatherings of his Mureeds. Hence, there was the danger that someone from among them might have felt jealous of the position of Maulana Husamuddin

(Rahmatullah Alaihe). This is so because generally jealousy is the one thing that prevents people from going to the people of knowledge and to the saintly ones. Hence, after this Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) turns towards a discussion on jealousy.

"It was because of jealousy that Iblees could not stand in respect before Hazrat Adam (Alaihis Salaam),
And it was through jealousy that he opposed righteousness.

It is because of jealousy that houses are destroyed and ruined
And through it a royal falcon inspite of its qualities becomes an ordinary crow.

Become like the dust under the feet of the men of truth
And cast dust on the head of jealousy as we have done"

We thank Allah Ta'ala that through the blessings of His Mercy, the first part of this book has been completed. Allah Ta'ala! Through Your Mercy and through the blessings of Your Noble Nabi, accept this effort and grant the writer hereof and the readers thereof the Divine Guidance to act upon it. Ameen.

And May the choicest blessings descend upon the best of His Creation, Muhammad (Sallellaho Alaihe Wasallam), and upon his family and his companions, the members of his household. O Most Merciful One.

Muhammad Akhtar
Thursday, 12 Rajab 1392